The Report Committee for Jessica Natalia Diaz-Hurtado
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following report:

Ta Ligado: Rodas e Hip Hop no Rio

APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:

Supervisor:

João Vargas

Lorraine Leu

Ta Ligado: Rodas e Hip Hop no Rio

by

Jessica Natalia Diaz-Hurtado, B.A.

Report

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this to my parents and my grandmother. For sacrificing everything so we could get something.

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First off, I would like to thank my family for the endless amount of support, for pushing me, and for motivating me to complete my master's degree. Thank you to my parents who migrated from Colombia and El Salvador to provide us a better future and gain the education we deserve. To my grandmother, a strong and motivated woman who taught me the value of hardwork. To my sisters for being the shoulders I could lean on.

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Abstract

Ta Ligado: Rodas e Hip Hop no Rio

Jessica Diaz-Hurtado, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2015

Supervisor: João Vargas

Given that hip-hop has its origin in communal sharing and resistance, how do spaces of urban art empower young people and build their identities to reclaim space? *Ta Ligado: Rodas e Hip Hop no Rio* is a short documentary-styled web series focusing on hip hop and urban art spaces for young people in Rio de Janeiro, a city with rapid urbanization and increased marginalization. Rio presents an understudied context to explore how youth respond to changes in urban conditions and public institutional support or lack thereof. Especially as a city being placed under the international microscope because of the recent 2014 World Cup and upcoming 2016 World Olympics and the politics it has with its displacement and invisibilization of communities. Youth organizations and hip hop events in Rio de Janeiro serve as an alternative outlet to address the social issues that are ignored and marginalized through reclaiming space. *Ta Ligado* captures the vibrant and diverse culture through interviews and community events that occurred during the summer of 2014.

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Introduction

The first time I hopped on the SuperVia, the main train system in Rio de Janeiro, I was with Rio's well known militant MC Slow da BF and he was taking us to the Espaço Cultural do Viaduto de Realengo. It was rush hour as we joined the packed train coming from Central Station. People from the center of the city were trying to get a seat home to the *periferia* (peripheral area, suburb). There were men, women and children selling beer, water, coca cola and snacks to the tired workers. While traveling to Zona Oeste, Slow told us about the heavy military influence of the dictatorship in the neighborhood since the 1980s and of the militias today. He was also preparing us for the hip hop show we were going to film. As we rushed out of the train car, we were led by the crowd and were at the top of the stairs of the *viaduto* (bridge). We saw that next to the tracks there were at least 200 young people, a huge sound system blasting dancehall, and skaters gliding on the road leading to the main event. Entering the scene I saw crowded groups of graf writers set up at different walls and other black and brown[1] young men in a cypher. To be honest, I was hype! I haven't been to a hip hop event this live in a couple of years and let alone in a different country. Rio de Janeiro's hip hop scene seemed very much alive and pulsating with an underground soul.

[1] There are 3 major systems of racial classifications widely used in Brazil. One used by the IBGE (Institute of Brazilian Geography and Statistics) employ the following categories in the Brazilian census: white (branco), brown (pardo), black (preto) Asian (amarelo) and indigenous (indigena). The second is the popular system which uses a large number race or color terms such as *moreno, claro, etc*. The last and newer classification is referred to as the "black movement system" influenced by the black movement and is now used by academia, media and the government. This system uses only the words *"branco"* and *"negro"* (Telles 2004, 81-88).

Contrary to its mainstream representation, hip hop is life from the soul. It is creating new realities using the power of all of its elements: DJing, MCing, Breakdancing, Graffiti writing and Knowledge Dispersion that occurs in cyphers. A roda in Brazil is similar to a cypher in hip hop where culture is celebrated and ideas are challenged. A "cypher", or roda cultural, is a circle formed by the gathering of people where hip hop culture is exchanged and represents the cyclical nature of life, much like a roda de capoeira. Given that hip hop has its origin in communal sharing and resistance, how do spaces of urban art empower young people and build their identities to reclaim space? For those not familiar with hip hop, a cypher is generally done by MC's (Masters of Ceremonies) and Bboys/girls (breakdancers) in a space where artists come together in a circle to share struggles in dance and rap, compete through battles and share ideas through freestyling. Cyphers can occur anywhere: at house parties, slam poetry competitions, breakdance competitions, hip hop shows, poetry shows, hip hop theater shows, high schools, middle schools, elementary schools, on the street, in a community center, in a library, under bridges, and in plazas. The power of a cypher transforms public space into a place to build knowledge (Pough 2004, 41). Ideas and skills are shared and challenged with a purpose to bring people together in community.

The purpose of this written thesis is to serve as an academic reflection and analysis to Ta Ligado: Rodas e Hip hop no Rio, a short video documentary series focused on young people's empowerment in the hip hop movement through occupying and claiming public and private space. The episodes of the series will be made available online starting June 2015 at www.taligadohiphop.com. Through detailed research I am

analyzing how young Brazilians in Rio de Janeiro reclaim space and construct identity through hip hop culture. Space is where power is held and robbed. It is where dreams are created and histories are destroyed. Space is where people both physically and metaphorically go back to reclaim and retell a story, thus changing the dominant narratives. I will explore the notion of space through three different lenses: 1) the public, 2) the private, and 3) how NGOs negotiate space with youth and the state. I focus on young people because they are who constitute the hip hop audiences, make up the hip hop groups, and organize the events. They lead this hip hop movement in Rio. Ta Ligado's (video) purpose is not only to demonstrate this visually and aurally stimulating culture, but also make this material accessible to the communities I worked with in the summer of 2014. The project focuses on how these spaces are not only necessary for recreating dominant narratives, but also for the survival of this group of youth. Many young people living in the *periferias* or *comunidades*, predominantly black and brown youth, are often not exposed to opportunities or resources that allow social mobility and are subjected to the structural oppression in the form of racism, making them most vulnerable to the dangers of drug trafficking. Ta ligado, title of the project, translates as "You Feel Me?" or "You know what I mean?" phrases used in both languages in the hip hop community. I use this to draw focus on the diasporic connections hip hop has in its vernacular to identifying as lower class, black, marginalized and/or apart of the hip hop culture.

Spaces that welcome hip hop are critical for young people to build community despite the war-like violence experienced by civilians from police forces and drug traffickers. Hip hop in Brazil provides an avenue to create spaces of dialogue and

citizenship claims. Hip hop gives space to assert black identity while denouncing powers such as the government and the military police for its injustice and brutality against black bodies. You cannot talk about hip hop without talking about race, just like you cannot talk about race without talking about the structural and institutional violence against black bodies. Brazil is a country where the racial democracy myth has been so widespread that it leaves a hyperconciousness/negation of race that makes hip hop, a culture rooted in the black diaspora and its political expression, a controversial topic (Vargas 2004). Hip hop not only goes against this idea of racial democracy, but it also doesn't wade in its silence. It does the complete opposite and unapologetically claims blackness as a political identity in Brazil.

What makes hip hop in Brazil unique is that it has a very old school feel while continuously keeping the fifth element of consciousness in tact. I am not trying to compare realities and racial politics from Brazil and the U.S., but I am drawing from the influence of what the hip hop pioneers instilled across the globe. Because hip hop in the U.S. has grown towards a capitalistic economic market diluting its political message, its intentions as a catalyst for change are very much underground and still thriving in all parts of the country. In Rio de Janeiro, I still see hip hop with a more focused militant and racially conscious backdrop speaking to its people's conditions. There are still those in Rio who produce hip hop similar to the U.S. mainstream emphasizing partying and drugs. There are no sets of rules dictating what is "real" hip hop or what it is not. It is the community who decides and even within the community there are differing opinions. These are contradictions I explore during a time where Brazil is the center of the

international gaze, due to its participation in mega events such as the 2014 World Cup and 2016 World Olympics. I will analyze Brazil's racial politics through the displacement of black people in Rio.

To contextualize Rio de Janeiro's history with institutionalized racism, I analyze the work of scholars such as João Vargas and Jaime Alves. Jaime Alves' dissertation, "Macabre Spatialities: The Politics of Race, Gender and Violence in a Neoliberal City" offers an analysis on space making through São Paulo's context. He argues, "historical space occupied by whites in Brazilian racial imaginary is translated in the spatial production of the city" (Alves 2012, 53). In a city where police are targeting, criminalizing, and killing black youth, it is imperative to analyze Rio's take on locality through the lens of race as well as gender.

Using Appadurai's theoretical framework on space, I argue that locality is a key element in the development of Rio's hip hop culture. I'll explore space and locality through the theoretical eyes of Arjun Appadurai. According to Appadurai, locality is the "structure of feeling which is produced by particular forms of intentional activities and yields particular sorts of material effects" (Appadurai 1996, 199). Ellen Sluis' "The Opening Up of a Favela" explains that claiming space "should not be merely seen as related to a geographical, or physical, territory, ….space, or rather, locality can also be constructed through social processes" (Sluis 2011, 12). Locality is not limited by geographic boundaries, but produced through relations of power. Sluis gives the reader an example through explaining the concept of locality versus neighborhood. "Neighbourhoods refer to already existing social forms and locality is seen as a product

of it" (Sluis 2011, 41). Sluis hints that these existing areas have an economic, racialized, and social history shaping the notion of what makes locality. In Rio, you have *bairros, favelas, periferia* and *zonas* where hip hop groups, events and collectives make sure they represent their hood. The sense of pride stems from the notion of locality communicating collective struggle and community.

Methodology

In this research I am gathering my data through on site fieldwork, analyzing current research, and reproducing my analysis in a written and video format. I conducted my fieldwork research in Rio de Janeiro during the summer of 2014. I used informal and formal interviews to gather my information, and along with two colleagues, (one, my partner who focuses on journalism, the other a childhood friend who works with documentary filmmaking). We were able to film many different hip hop events and background roll for the documentary series. I was able to be in contact with different hip hop groups, organizations and events all throughout the city including: Duque de Caxias, Nova Iguaçu, Bangu, Realengo, Santissimo, Campo Grande, Mare, Cantagalo, Cascadura, Madureira, Meier, Rocinha, Cidade de Deus, and downtown. I conducted 21 interviews, attended over 15 events and visited 5 organization sites from the favelas and periferia to the center of the city. Given that the hip hop community is still developing and growing, I was able to move through different communities by way of introductions through friends at most events. I also conducted a literature review that helps inform my

data and interviews collected. Lastly, I am producing mini documentary web series to present my data and share with the communities I worked with.

Positionality is key in the development of my study. My positionality is: a light skinned Colombian-Salvadoran young woman born and raised in the DC area from an immigrant working class background. I am also a part of hip hop and art communities in the United States. I think coming from an immigrant and working class background is what connected me with the communities. Marginality was our connection and hip hop was our language. Being from the United States did skew my views on hip hop at first. Yet I learned Brazil's social, cultural and racial politics influenced their hip hop in a very different way than it has in other places of the world. Also, given that I am a woman, I was not taken seriously most times and often seen as a sexual being versus just a person. My partner was with me most times, who is male, so his presence influenced the conversations. By the end, people began taking me more seriously, which helped the project move along. However this is not just in hip hop spaces, but a common thread in most spaces I enter as a woman that is male dominated. I will develop this more in my third chapter focusing on gender and sexuality in Rio's hip hop scene.

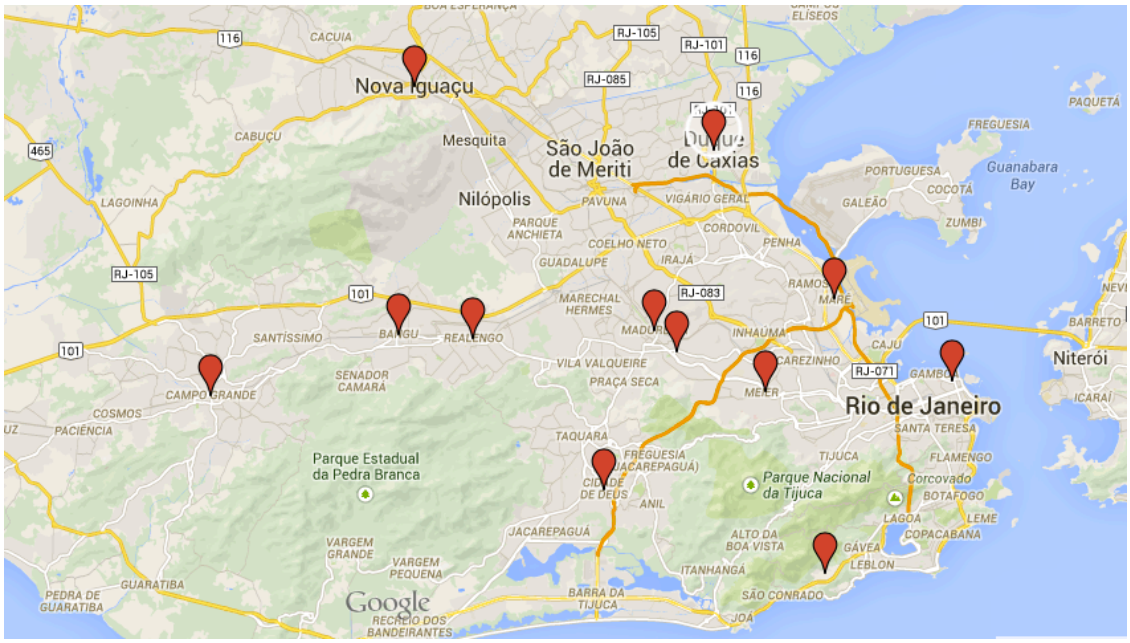

Illustration 1: Map of Rio de Janeiro, distinguishing the locations of the organizations, events and interviews.

Literature Review

Given that hip hop and urban art have been historically marginalized in the academic world, hip hop scholars have utilized disciplines such as history, anthropology, ethnomusicology, media studies, black studies and education to address the positive effects this art form has impacted young people.

I will draw on literature, academic articles, dissertations, visual art, live performances, and documentaries from a variety of disciplines when analyzing the hip hop's impact on young people reclaiming space. I will address the following themes in my research: community organizing and youth involvement, urban areas and its relation to its art, hip hop and poetry, black politics in Brazil, spatiality and urban development.

To locate this research in a Brazilian racial context, I will utilize articles and books from scholars like João Vargas, Luciane Rocha, John Burdick, Ignacio Cano, and Jaime Alves. I will explore Vargas' and Alves research on the increasing violence against black Brazilians in the 1990s and early 2000s. To locate this research in black geographical context I will look to Katherine McKitterick's work as well as Ted Gordon's analysis of the black diaspora.

When deconstructing space in a racialized and gendered context in hip hop, I dialogue with a variety of renowned scholars. I will engage with hip hop scholars such as Tricia Rose and Gwendolyn Pough. Whereas Pough addresses the public sphere and the relationship hip hop has with black womanhood, Rose's racial implications on locality and black young men in hip hop shape my argument. When creating an analysis on gender and sexuality within hip hop in Brazil, I utlize Patricia Hill Collins, Nicole Fleetwood, and Sueli Carneiro's work. To continue to analyze Appadurai's theory of locality, I analyze Katherine McKittrick's work on black geographies, Henri Lefebvre's social space, and parallel Michael Dawson's and Nancy Fraser's interpretation of the subaltern counterpublics.

Given that most Brazilian hip hop scholarship focuses on its birth city, São Paulo and not Rio de Janeiro, I will look to articles and dissertations to guide me through this analysis by authors such as Shoshana Lurie, Eduardo Rocha, Micael Hershmann and Sergio Jose de Machado Leal. I will also rely on the parallel's Brazilian funk and hip hop have in black Brazilian communities. Lastly, I will look to films, documentaries and music to locate my research in a more contemporary lens and serve as examples for my

documentary work. All of these resources have informed my experience whilst abroad in Rio conducting fieldwork, and provided context to my written reflection.

I hope to extend the conversation on how hip hop, although commercialized, can be used as a tool for reclaiming identity and space. There are other sides of hip hop that continue to develop its fifth element: Knowledge Dispersion. In Brazil's case it has not yet been "pimped out" like it has in the United States but still utilizes many elements of the U.S. hip hop professionalism. This thesis paper along with Ta Ligado short documentary series, I will address these developments and its benefits towards young people.

The paper includes three chapters that intend to contextualize the experiences that occurred during my fieldwork in summer 2014 and add analysis to the documentary series. The first chapter will focus on the history and context on hip hop as a movement in Rio de Janeiro. The second chapter will focus on the physical spaces I visited, such as NGO's, public spaces, and private spaces and its effects on marginalized youth. It will focus on the histories of the spaces as well as what it means to have these spaces available and reclaimed for young people's personal agency. Lastly, the third chapter will emphasize the role of women in the carioca hip hop culture and reflect a bit of my experience in a male dominated space as a woman identified person. I also will include the narratives of the few women I interviewed to hear their experiences as artists and organizers firsthand. The documentary series will include four different episodes that will be released in June 2015. The first episode Historia and Influencia gives a quick history of history and influences of carioca hip hop. The second episode, Zona Oeste, focuses on

two hip hop spaces I visited on the west side: Espaço Cultural Viaduto de Realengo and Caixa de Surpesa. The third episode focuses on the narratives of three women I interviewed reflecting their experiences. The last episode, Baixada Fluminese speaks to the history of that region and to two hip hop organizations I interviewed, Movimento Enraizados and Cypher na Rua. Ta Ligado: Rodas e Hip Hop no Rio video project and thesis report will present a contextual analysis of the relationship hip hop has with space and young people.

Chapter 1: Black Politics and Urban Music in Brazil

Some mainstream media outlets depict hip hop as the stillborn child of the civil rights movement; a birth before the crack era took over many black and Latino ghettos. A failed revolution grasping the spray can dressing up an outlaw art. The death of Black Power as a militant movement, militarization of urban space resulting in aggressive gentrification, police brutality, declining parks, school closings and infiltration of radical groups such as the Young Lords Party and Black Panthers all influenced the beginning of hip hop in urban America (Akom 2009, 51). Contrary to what mainstream media makes it out to be, I see hip hop as a seed of resistance. I see it as a gasp of air, looking for leaders after Malcolm X , MLK, Fred Hampton, Angela Davis, Assata Shakur, Kathleen Cleaver were murdered, locked up and/or persecuted by the U.S. government.

In this chapter I will address how the historical narrative of black art and violence against black and brown bodies laid a foundation of militant hip hop in Rio de Janeiro today. Hip hop emerged as a way to create an alternative youth identity formation for communities where industrialization melted down and where local institutions had been demolished. It is a culture that attempts to negotiate the experiences of the marginalized and is a "fundamental matrix of self expression for the whole generation" (Rose 1994, 21-35). It was born in Bronx, New York rooted in Jamaican reggae, Puerto Rican bomba y plena influences, Salsa, African call and response, capoeira, and tae kwon do, making hip hop inherently diasporic. According to Dr. Ted Gordon's analysis of ethnography in the diaspora through the lens of Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall, the African diaspora as a theory has its roots in politics. While Hall perceives the African diaspora as a result of

displacement and a "particular kind of identity that dwells in or on several places at the same time", for Gilroy the diaspora is the dispersal of people of African descent creating different black cultures around the globe (Gordon 1999, 286; Hall 1993; Gilroy 1993). In an interview with Zulu Luke, an old school breakdancer and founder of Grupo de Breaking Consciente da Rocinha (GBCR), he says the first time he heard hip hop and saw breakdancing he could immediately identify with it, although he couldn't understand the words. Once he figured out what people were rapping he felt that they were speaking his reality. Hip hop lives in several places at the same time creating a new black culture that is able to dialogue with the diaspora.

Considered one of the most recent manifestations of post-colonial art, hip hop expands itself beyond cultural outlets as a form of politics suitable for the post colonial era bringing community together through performance (Lipsitz 1994, 36). The globalization of hip hop allowed dialogues focusing on the African diaspora, colonialism and youth empowerment as a uniting theme in the global community to surface in the late 1980s. However I would like to contest that although hip hop may be considered a post-colonial art, I suggest that it is more of a decolonizing art that resists colonialism and its violence manifested in today's society. Colonialism is not an idea of the past but is a state of the present and is redefining itself through the changes of power. When analyzing political resistance it is imperative to look to the "…alternative epistemologies, surviving and emerging subjectivities and modes of representation that exist in colonial and neo-colonial societies…"(Morana 2008, 11). Thus, using the "post" in post-colonial depoliticizes contemporary history and fails to redefine this word in the perspective of

those colonized. Hip hop as a decolonizing art practices in a dialogue through protest against the modern day colonialism.

The creation of hip hop originates from The Zulu Nation tracing colonial history and with modern day colonialism as a form of protest and diasporic dialogue. According to Black Studies scholar George Lipsitz, hip hop in the United States was founded by Afrika Bambaataa, who instilled politics and knowledge as apart of the Zulu Nation philosophy. Afrika Bambaataa, an ex-Black Spade gang member, founded the Zulu Nation. Inspired by the 1964 movie Zulu and its images of colonialism, Black solidarity and power, the mission of the organization was to stop the violence between gangs and young people in the Bronx. "Bambaataa tried to channel anger and enthusiasm of young people in the South Bronx away from gang fighting and into music, dance and graffiti" (Lipsitz 1994, 26). The original generation found themselves unwanted by the system, "unwanted as students by schools facing drastic budget cuts, unwanted citizens or users of city institutions" (Lipsitz 1994, 27). The Zulu Nation created space for marginalized voices to gather and promote the power of hip hop and community while utilizing their knowledge as consumers of popular music to protest white supremacy and anti-black oppression. Bambaataa, along with other hip hop organizers and artists are apart of this international community that practices what Gilroy likes to refer to as "diasporic intimacy", an international dialogue between marginalized populations in urban areas suffering under capitalism and neoliberalism (Lipsitz 1994, 27; Gilroy 1993). Given that hip hop is a cross cultural network and exchange, the hip hop diaspora is apart of the

black diaspora. Today, the Universal Zulu Nation has representatives all over the world, including Brazil.

Context and History of Black Politics in Brazil

In order to combat racism, black Brazilians have organized themselves around issues regarding institutional violence and oppression for hundreds of years using politics and culture. It is imperative to understand the social and political legacy of Rio de Janeiro to fully comprehend the rise of hip hop communities. Racial and socio-economic factors need to be understood in a city where 47% of young people ages 15-29 are black and are the main targets of institutional violence (L. Rocha 2008, 17-18). Violence and the censorship/suppression of black cultural expression go hand in hand in Rio de Janeiro. Thus, understanding black resistance, ideologies and displacement in Rio is essential to deconstruct hip hop's current state.

Coded forms of resistance in response to violence dates back to when enslaved persons first arrived in Brazil. Black space in Brazil was made institutionally illegal in 1830 where a gathering of four or more slaves, referred to as a *batuque*, was prohibited in Rio de Janeiro (Mattos&Abreu 2007, 74). This technique of policing and surveilling black spaces were strategized by the state to prevent uprisings and continue to maintain the power over enslaved Africans. This traditional legacy seemed to set precedent for the criminalization of contemporary black expression such as Black Soul, Baile Funk and with hip hop as well. In the 1800s, enslaved Africans also engaged in lundu, fado and fandango dances and music. Jongo was a genre of music created by enslaved Africans as a way to reinvent spaces of resistance and community. Through dance, song, memory,

call and response, Jongo served as an Afro-Brazilian form of coded resistance originating from the Southeast of Brazil (Mattos&Abreu 2007, 70). Today Jongo is still practiced in Rio de Janeiro in many communities including the public space of Lapa to engage both tourists and locals to its history and roots. Thus since enslavement, black Brazilians have used the practice of coding for community resistance in response to the violence committed against their population. However violence and displacement continued through various means facilitated by the state.

There is a strong history of violence and the displacement of black people in the interest of white elites in Rio de Janeiro. As early as 1872, almost half the population was black and it quickly diminished to 37% in a span of 15 years (Hanchard 1998, 29). Therefore in the early 1900s there was a push for social harmony to follow suit with Brazil's modernization plans. In the 1930s the racial democracy ideology developed and promoted later gearing the country towards *embraquecimento*[2] (Lurie 2000). The idea of racial democracy[3] in Brazil, where race was not seen as a factor shaping injustice, helped both those defending slavery and those attempting to abolish it. After the abolition of slavery in Brazil, this idea of racial harmony intensified, especially with white supremacist notions circulating in the Atlantic world such as Vasconcello's *mestizaje* ideology. Slavery in Brazil was thought to be gentler and kinder, and according to

[2] *Embraquecimento* or whitening was an ideology promoted by eugenicists where they believed that black and "mulatto" people where inferior yet can overcome this inferiority through miscegenation, or whitening of the race. This greatly influenced Brazil's immigration policy where they invited and subsidized European immigrants (Telles 2009, 28-29).

[3] Gilberto Freyre's *Casa Grande e Senzala* argued that Brazilian society was unique in that it had no racism, promoting the idea of racial democracy. This national ideology dominated Brazil from the 1930s-1990s and is arguably still a strong belief to many (Telles 2009, 33).

Paulina Alberto's "Terms of Inclusion", abolitionist Joaquim Nabuco thought it "never embittered the slave's spirit toward the master, at least collectively nor did it create between races that mutual hate which mutually exists between oppressors and oppressed" (Alberto 2011, 9). In the early 1920s black thinkers also highlighted the importance of this racial mixture, but shortly after the 1964 dictatorship was established, ideologies began to change towards resistance and political expression.

Although black intellectual ideologies emerged, the state responded with repression and thus art as coded resistance continued to develop in black Brazilian history. Established in the early 1930s, the The Frente Negra Brasileira (FNB) fought for racial equality and critiqued racial democracy. Soon after in 1937, Getúlio Vargas's Estado Novo regime was implemented and the FNB was suspended posing as a national threat to the state. In response to the oppression, art and theater became a political outlet in the 1940s where activists such as Abdias Nascimento founded Teatro Experimental do Negro. It is important to note that artistic and political expression was occurring during a time where black Brazilians were again forcibly removed from the center of Rio de Janeiro and pushed to the peripheries, mostly towards the Zona Norte and Baixada Fluminese (Hanchard 1998, 28-29). This was part of Rio's urban renewal project to make the city attractive to tourists as the "Cidade Maravilhosa" through burning and destroying black neighborhoods, justifying it as "cleaning up the city" and pushing towards modernization (Alberto 2011, 72).

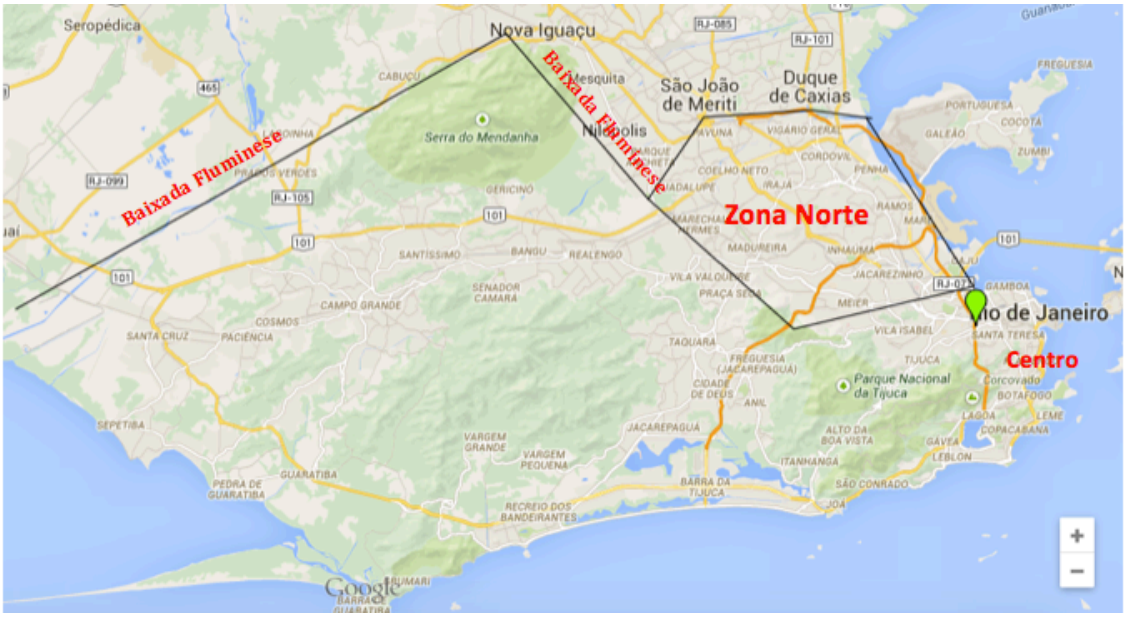

Illustration 2: Map of Rio de Janeiro, distinguishing Zona Norte (Northside) and Baixada Fluminese.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Black Soul emerged in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Although heavily influenced by the U.S. "black is beautiful" movement and soul music, Black Soul was a process of identity making for black Brazilians. The first black soul party was in 1967 in Rio's Zona Norte, known for its largely black and brown population. This party was a historical marker for the Black Soul music movement in Brazil where black youth practiced "cultural forms neither African or Brazilian", and thus began a diasporic dialogue (Hanchard 1998, 112). There were also dialogues occurring between different genres like samba and soul where Black Soul parties would occur in *escolas de samba*[4].

The rise of black organizations and cultural expression spoke to the diaspora in Brazil during the midst of a dictatorship. In the 1970s Black Soul was under suppression by the military dictatorship as a result to the white elite concerns of these parties

[4] Today, CUFA, Central Unica das Favelas- an organization promoting cultural citizenship and youth empowerment in favelas, sponsors "Soul + Samba" group who use both soul and samba as a way to redefine samba.

becoming a gateway for Afro-Brazilian protests. While this suppression was occurring, the Movimento Negro Unificado was founded in São Paulo and started as an umbrella organization for other groups organizing themselves around black militancy and racial politics in 1978. This was occurring while cultural expressions such as Baile Charme, funk and dancehall began appearing at parties as a reminiscent of the Black Soul movement. Whereas in São Paulo party goers were traditional middle class black youth, Black Rio was attended by black youth from poorer backgrounds living in the *periferia* or *favelas*. By 1987, there were 138 organizations as apart of the black power movement in São Paulo. This heavily impacted the birth of Brazilian hip hop; similar to how the Panthers influenced hip hop in the United States. While these organizations were fighting against the hegemonic powers that sponsored state violence and racism, they also were addressing how these communities were also targets.

There are significant links of the killing and targeting of black poor youth and favelas in Rio de Janeiro. Most people who inhabit favelas or *comunidades*, "the agglomerations of substandard and often illegal housing that emerged in Rio de Janeiro in the early 20th century", are of African descent (Freire-Medeiros 2013, 55). The space of a favela and a prison seem to mirror each other's appearance of concrete walls and constant militarization of non-white Brazilians and their spaces. Within 40 years, the number of favelas grew more than five times in Rio de Janeiro with 26 favelas counted in 1920 jumping to 147 favelas in 1960 (Freire-Medeiros 2013, 58-9). Today, there are over 500 favelas in Rio de Janeiro. Favelas have been historically neglected, targeted, and criminalized to demonize and dehumanize those who reside within (Vargas 2005a, 80).

They are seen as a source of criminality. The media and police force are used as the main weapons against these communities that create an anti-black sentiment amongst society. Police have historically targeted black people, and specifically black youth. 66% of the 8 million people living in favelas are black (Alves 2009, 615). In 2003, 75% of the 900 people killed in Rio were from favelas (Vargas 2005a, 282).

In the early 1990s, police brutality gained international media attention. The police have a monetary interest in protecting the interests of the elites and often abuse their uniform (Caldeira 2001). According to Ignacio Cano's study on racial bias on police use of lethal force through proportional evaluation, black Brazilians represent 8% of Rio de Janeiro, yet are 25% of the accidental victims, 27% of wounded opponents and 30% of the opponents killed. Therefore black people in Rio are three times more likely to be wounded or murdered by the police (Cano 2010, 40-41). In 2008 the UPP, or Unidade Policial Pacificadora, a police unit used to pacify favelas and promote the approximation between police and population, was created and implemented across many favelas in Rio de Janeiro (Sluis 2011, 10). In preparation for the mega events in Rio, the PRONASCI (Programa Nacional de Segurança Pública com Cidadania) was launched in 2007 attempting to reduce the number of homicides in the country and sought to reduce the causes of violence. Thus the PRONASCI targeted young people ages 15-29 so different actions could be implemented. However in states like Rio, the project turned into a wage supplement for police officers and thus profited off of the proposal's original goals (L. Rocha 2014, 98,99). Although there is recent data on the decrease in homicide rates, according to Rocha there has been an increase in disappearances with 6,000 people

disappeared in Rio de Janeiro between 2012-2013 (L Rocha 2014, 100). Scholars such as João Vargas and Jaime Alves claim that these homicides facilitated by the state are considered an act of genocide against the black population in Brazil.

The genocide of black people in Brazil has been a strategic tactic in its colonial project, not so different from the United States. Genocide is defined as "killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm, deliberate infliction on the group conditions of life, imposing measures intended to prevent births, forcibly transferring children of the group to another group" (Vargas 2005b, 268). Claiming that state sponsored violence against the black population in Brazil as genocide is an idea that is heavily contested and not yet readily accepted, however it is important to note that genocide theorists have purposefully excluded these groups from their studies given that black lives have been historically undervalued and thus possibly related to the omission (Vargas 2005b, 272). After this statistical data on the homicides of this population, I ask, where are the bodies? Where does hip hop as an art of resistance fit in Rio's *realidade*?

Soul, Funk and Hip Hop in Rio

Hip hop emerges out of revolutionary chants and positive expressions grown from breaks that challenge hegemonic cultural and political powers. Brazilian hip hop uses United States discourses and adapts it to the Brazilian political and social context influenced by soul and funk while constantly in a cultural dialogue with other black American and Brazilian artists (Leal 2009, 140). In Brazil, hip hop is a way to manifest the politics of black and poor Brazilians and contribute to the black public sphere

(Oliveira 2009). With the influences of Black Soul and funk, hip hop was born legs first, with dance. (Rocha 2012, 4).

According to DJ TR's *Acorda Hip Hop*, hip hop in Brazil is rooted in dance. In his interview with rapper Thaide, the MC says that hip hop began in Brazil with Nelsao Funk & Cia, a breakdance group founded by activist and maracatu dancer Nelson Triunfo from Pernambuco. In 1983 Nelson Triunfo started breakdance competitions in Praca Republica in Sampa, and moved them to Sao Bento metro station (Burdick 2013, 30). Shortly after, graffiti began popping up around Sao Bento and soon this area became a space for future hip hop events and cyphers (Leal 2009, 151). It is in São Paulo where young people began claiming public space through hip hop.

The birth of hip hop in Brazil through the lens of spatial relations is useful when referring to power. Theorist Henri Lebfebvre offers an insightful perspective on urban space and power. He explains that social space is social product and "serves as a tool of thought and of action; that in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power; yet that, as such, it escapes in part from those who would make use of it" (Lebfebvre 1992, 26). Because Appadurai suggests that locality is built on context and history, I suggest that using Lefebvre's notion on social space allows hip hop to dialogue with space as power. São Paulo bboys, in this case, used these public spaces through hip hop to reclaim that power built on racial and political exclusion. Black and brown youth are people who escape the social reality of the urban planners when building public spaces. Hip hop speaks to the marginal communities of black and brown youth and it gave them power that is denied to them everyday through

social means. This empowerment is translated globally, and in Brazil, nationally. Hip hop in Rio de Janeiro is much more understudied, perhaps because it shares the same space as funk.

Funkeiros[5] presented new cultural mediators that also has a history rooted in black identity formation. While the media represents *comunidades* as violent, these cultural mediators "contribute to political renewal by creating provocative discourse about racism, police violence, and poverty competing with media and academic discourses" (Bentes 2013, 28). Brazilian Funk is a style of music influenced by American Funk, soul and James Brown and is linked to the black conscience movement that focused on the politics of black identity in Brazil. As mentioned before, funk parties became an expression of the politically repressed Black Soul parties in the 1970s. Interestingly, funk parties began in Zona Sul in the 1970s in venues such as the Canecao that is currently known to be an elite venue (Yudice 1997, 40). However because these nightclubs preferred MPB[6] over funk, the parties migrated to Zona Norte following the historical political displacement of black people into a cultural displacement.

Without the soul and funk drum kicks, there would be no hip hop movement. The quality of this sound from the 1970s are just as "important to hip hop sound as the machines that deconstruct and formulate them" (Rose 1994, 78). According to Zulu Luke, [baile] funk is a precursor to the introduction to hip hop. Although hip hop emerged in Rio more strongly in the early 1990s, funk is what dominated the scene. It is

[5] People who participate and practice in the Brazilian funk music scene
[6] Musica Popular Brasileira (Popular Brazilian Music)

important to recognize the origins of funk as they relate to hip hop's transcultural forms. Both forms of music in Rio de Janeiro are seen as the music of the popular masses, and are rooted in black identity formation. Funk and Black Soul emerged during the dictatorship in the 1970s, where claiming black identity was seen as a political and social threat. However hip hop in Brazil surfaced shortly after the dictatorship was over and was transitioning into democracy. These hip hop artists were not only claiming black identity as a political identity, but also using this form of music originating outside of Brazil in order to critique its racial relations[7].

The beginning of hip hop in Rio de Janeiro provides a much different experience than in São Paulo. According to Catherine Dowdy's dissertation, "Youth Music and Agency: Undoing Race, Poverty and Violence in Rio de Janeiro", the origin of hip hop in Rio de Janeiro began in Madureira, a disputable claim (Dowdy 2012, 56-58). According to many of the old school carioca hip hop heads, this location can be debated between various different parts of the city. However it is not contested that many hip hop parties began popping up in Madureira, a neighborhood that values black culture and where many youth found black music parties. Many of these parties were called *bola pretas,* soul, and funk. Today they are called Bailes Charme, focusing on hip hop and R&B. These parties take place under bridges, in parks and other public spaces occupied as a way of reclaiming public space for the community's use. The Viaduto in Maduerira would soon become the first and "most traditional" hip hop space in Rio de Janeiro"

[7] Leu, Lorraine. "Hip Hop in Brazil". Class lecture. University of Texas at Austin in Austin, TX. November 2014.

(Dowdy 2012, 58). The institutionalization of hip hop began with Rio de Janeiro's famous MC, MV Bill (Dowdy 2012, 63). In the early 1990s MV Bill founded the organization, CUFA. CUFA classes geared towards graffiti, breakdancing, deejaying, modeling, audio/visual media production, library arts, theater, football and basketball as well as certificate programs (Dowdy 2012, 73). They organized events such as Favela Fest, where favela culture is celebrated. Activities such as these are sponsored by the Secretary of Culture, and collaborate with the social justice arts organization known as Afro Reggae (Sluis 2011, 61).

As I began my research on hip hop spaces in Rio, different versions of hip hop's history in Rio emerged but all pointed towards the same goal of maintaining its fifth element and using culture as a means for change. Fortunately I was able to interview DJ TR, MV Bill's DJ in the 1990s where he offered me his views on hip hop's history in Rio and how the Zulu Nation influenced the beginning of this movement.

DJ TR: Hip Hop Legend and Respected Organizer

In July of 2014 after the madness of World Cup had simmered down, I chilled at D'Negro (DNG) a lot more often, a local hip hop racially conscious clothing store in Madureira. It sits right next to Portela de Samba, a famous samba school in Rio. It is not a coincidence that Portela is located directly next to DNG, both celebrating black culture. I would stop by DNG regularly to see what new *bones* (snapback hats) they had and to say hi to the homie and owner who introduced me to many hip hop connects around Zona Norte- a region of Rio often rivaling Zona Sul in the hip hop community given its racial and economic disparities. While in the back of DNG, serving myself some coffee, I

happened to sit in on an informal meeting with Junior and entrepreneur, organizer and dancer Pierry.

After being introduced, Pierry invited us to the city's new Parque de Madureira, a park that is locally known to be apart of Rio's project to improve the city given the recent 2014 World Cup and upcoming 2016 Olympics. The physical displacement of black neighborhoods to continue to "clean up" Rio has not halted and is very visible during these mega events. According to Dr. João Vargas, the number of communities with UPPs was supposed to jump from 31 to 40 within one year to increase safety before the mega event of the World Cup in 2014 (Vargas 2013, 284). After talking with cariocas in random places and events, they all would mention that although the World Cup was an exciting time. However they mentioned it affected the neighborhoods surrounding Maracana as well as the rising public transportation costs, reflecting the structural and economic racism in Brazil during these mega events. According to the residents, Parque Madureira is one of the few positives aspects of the World Cup neighborhood changes.

Parque Madureira holds their weekly Baile Charme dance, a musical movement considered the grandchild of soul. People of Madureira ranging between 12 years old to even 60 would meet up every Thursday at this newly built park to dance charme. After going and filming some footage for the video series, Ta Ligado, Pierry invited us to interview DJ TR that upcoming Saturday, a Zulu Nation leader in Rio de Janeiro.

Hip hop heads back in the 1980s in Rio de Janeiro were referred to as *malucos* carrying "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" under their arms and headphones bumpin KRS One. This is what Sergio Jose de Machado Leal, also known as DJ TR, explains to

me after being introduced by Pierry. Machado Leal was MV Bill's DJ for over ten years and also the author of what is considered the bible of carioca hip hop history, *Acorda Hip Hop!* As I walked into his home in CDD (Cidade de Deus) I felt very nervous interviewing this legend. DJ TR's home should be a carioca hip hop historical site. Marcelo D2 and MV Bill are just a few carioca hip hop legends that used to chill on the couch that I interviewed TR that July afternoon. TR recalls that there was no exact date or place to when hip hop started in Rio de Janeiro. However he remembers hip hop in Rio beginning around the late 1980s after the country was getting out of a military dictatorship. TR emphasizes the importance of the African diaspora in the hip hop movement and how the way people talked, dressed and danced translated politics that served as black identity. Although he heavily respects the influence of U.S. hip hop and its history, TR's goal is to continue to create and contribute to a Brazilian hip hop that speaks to young people's reality. This refers me back to Dr. Gordon's conversation on diaspora as a "foundation for cultural politics of identity among people's of African descent in the Americas" (Gordon 1999, 285). Although cultural details differ, there is an identity marker that is fundamentally political.

Illustration 3: DJ TR showing a picture of himself and MV Bill at his home in Cidade de Deus. Photo Credit: Jonathon Orta

When hip hop started, it migrated from São Paulo to the rest of the nation. TR recalls many cariocas thinking it would be a fad. However, Brazil's hip hop mecca lies in São Paulo, a very different social make up than Rio. He says,

> *"Hip hop in Rio de Janeiro talks about police brutality, geopolitics and the quotidian issues. Those in power refuse to talk about this and is not interesting for a state known for its tourism- that has beaches, carnival, soccer, samba, women. That [reality] is not interesting to sell in the tourist package. So it's easier to put those people [hip hop militants] talking way too much behind the postal card and sell something more pleasurable[to sell]. This is why hip hop in Rio de Janeiro has only been sustained in the ghettos and not having much influence in the media like it should have"*

Given that Rio de Janeiro represents the country on a global and touristic level, TR argues that the world does not want to see oppression, violence and poverty in 'paradise', that it rather be ignored and sugarcoated with the beaches of Ipanema and Copacabana. This is why it has taken longer for Rio to develop its hip hop movement than São Paulo, an industrial city that was able to organize its movement a bit clearer, he argues.

As the Zulu Nation coordinator for the Rio de Janeiro region, TR feels the responsibility of guiding the new generation and equip them with the fifth element of hip hop, Knowledge. In April of 2014, TR along with organizations and participants of the

hip hop movement created November 12th as the day for hip hop through the Assembleia Legislitiva do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. This victory does not only make history in the cultural/political movement, but as a historical marker in the black diaspora.

Knowledge as the fifth element in hip hop is still a widely circulated idea that is distributed during events and shows in Rio. It differs from the United States, where hip hop has been overly commercialized, institutionalized, and even used against communities of color. Mainstream hip hop in the United States has thus become apart of the hegemonic discourse, whereas in Rio I feel that it still challenges hegemony. It still has that potential to young people to, what Tupac Shakur would say, "spark the brain to change the world".

In this next chapter I will analyze the politics of the spaces I came in contact with during my fieldwork stay. They include NGO spaces, public spaces, and private spaces. I will contextualize each of these spaces to its locality, history, racial and gendered dynamics.

Chapter 2: Hip Hop and Space in Rio de Janeiro- Case Studies

It is important to understand Rio de Janeiro's social landscape in order to analyze how young people navigate space in hip hop settings. This is not to generalize Rio's diverse hip hop scene, but to serve as a reflection of the observations made during my summer fieldwork research. In this chapter, I will provide a contextual analysis of 7 different places I entered where hip hop culture was celebrated and practiced. I organize these places in 3 categories- public spaces, private spaces and NGO spaces. In this chapter I argue that regardless of the type of space in which hip hop is present, the artists attempt to continue to push their agenda towards consciousness and engage in the politics of each locality given its specific socio-demographics. With these locations, I am demonstrating how these artists are mapping out hip hop culture and black geographies. These invisible geographies are made visible through this cultural movement and by taking up space. Young black and brown youth are constantly negotiating space from theaters to streets, to even UPP centers. In this chapter I discuss how young people literally etch out these spaces and analyze how it reflects the social and political climate in Rio de Janeiro.

I divide the 7 places into three different categories located all across Rio. In the public space category, I will analyze three different places where weekly and monthly hip hop events are held in the *periferia*. In the private space category, I extensively analyze one private space in Zona Norte and its relation to the performer and identity politics. In the NGO spaces category I contextualize two places and their history with the NGO's relation of power. Lastly, there is one space that is left uncategorized given its movement

between different places and helps me understand hip hop's relationship to Rio as a police state. Although each region has its own stereotypes and perception of one another, they are heterogeneous and I only saw certain parts of each region given my time constraint.

From reppin' your crew through your neighborhood to your tag being identifiable with a *bairro*, locality is pertinent in Rio's hip hop scene. This is vital in young people's construction of identity given that, "Identity in hip hop is deeply rooted in the specific local experience and one's attachment to and status in a local group of alternative family" (Rose 1994, 35). Given that I am framing this work in terms of locality, hip hop as a social process is being constructed through the specific areas in Rio that are rooted in their neighborhoods and zones. From what hip hop heads emphasized, every zona in Rio is distinct and unique to its history and social context.

In Zona Sul, which to many living in the *periferia* includes downtown, beaches and tourism, is an area full of money, opportunities and playboys. From different definitions explained to me by old school and new school hip hop heads, playboys are young people who "front" that they are from a rough environment and are not true to themselves or their representations of themselves in their art. They appropriate the experience of living in the *periferia* in order to fit in or profit off of the commodified image of hip hop. I did not have much contact with hip hop in Zona Sul other than events occurring in Lapa's FEBARJ (Federacao dos Blocos Afros e Afroxes do Rio de Janeiro) and other hip hop shows located in theaters and museums. This is the depiction explained to me by many outside of living in that area however, I did know of hip hop and reggae

shows and groups occurring in black communities such as Cantagalo and Vidigal that I was not able to attend. These perceptions are not to dismiss the important work young people are doing and organizing in that locality. I spent more time in the *periferia* of Zona Norte, Zona Oeste and Baixada Fluminese hip hop circles.

Zona Norte is a place where it is more related to the *periferia* and black cultural production. It is not as commercialized to tourists like Zona Sul. Zona Norte has a larger black population and that sector has a history of settling in this part of Rio due to political and racial displacement from Zona Sul while Rio was trying to "clean up" its city in the 1940s. Due to this, informal housing and poverty has struck this particular part of the city harder than others, making resources more difficult to obtain. The hip hop scene in Zona Norte is very strong, and is beginning to produce professional music without having to travel all the way to Zona Sul, as many artists have done. However, many artists from Zona Norte still do rely on Zona Sul to produce higher quality tracks, as well as São Paulo's influences and support to continue their music.

Zona Oeste is much more community based in its hip hop scene and is beginning to produce their music and contribute to the graffiti and hip hop clothing economy. Baixada Fluminese is far from everything and is not even considered a part of Rio sometimes. However, it is gaining a reputation of militancy surrounding the topic of hip hop and staying true to its roots of community while denouncing violence waged against peripheries, favelas and the black population.

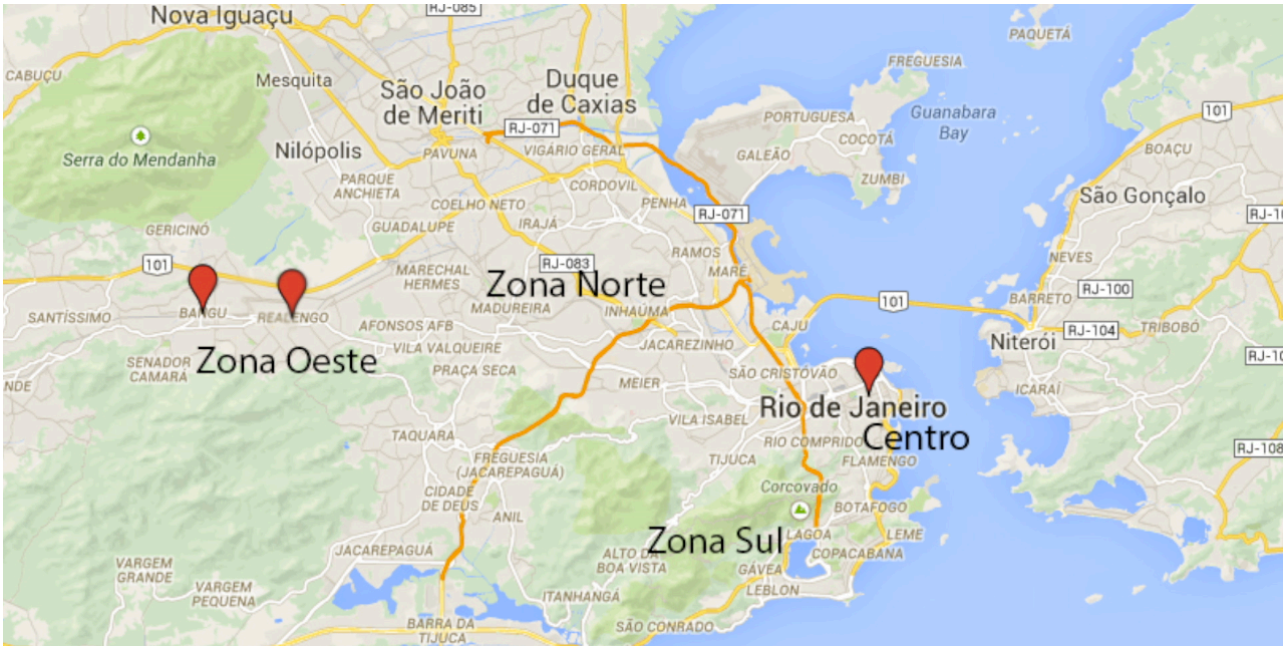

Illustration 4: Map of Rio de Janeiro

Public Space

Under bridges, plazas, parks, the street and clothing stores are all different public spaces I visited in Rio de Janeiro which held hip hop events. They were all in Morro Agudo, Realengo, Madureira and Duque de Caxias, neighborhoods of Baixada Fluminese, Zona Oeste and Zona Norte. In these public spaces, *Batalhas de Conhecimento* and break battles would be the center of the events. Either DJing, graffiti writing, and/or skating would almost always accompany the main event. In this section I will focus on two public places in the Zona Norte and one place in Zona Oeste.

Cypher Na Rua –Duque de Caxias- Baixada Fluminese-Praca

Cypher Na Rua is a monthly breakdancing event that occurs in Duque de Caxias, a city apart of Baixada Fluminese. I attended two of these monthly events where young

people would gather for freestyle cyphers and/or battles. At least 100-150 young people gathered, mostly male and black. The purpose of Cypher na Rua, as explained to me by Raphinha, the twenty year old main organizer, breaker and photographer, is to bring hip hop back to the streets. Given that hip-hop in Rio de Janeiro is currently perceived to be more commercialized, he feels that it is important to maintain hip hop's roots and to continue it's mission in fulfilling it's fifth element: consciousness. The other organizers are his cousins, Zulu Gregorio and Pedrinho, who serve as the hosts and logistical coordinators. Cypher Na Rua takes place in a plaza in Duque de Caxias between the Teatro Raul Cortez and Biblioteca Pública Municipal Leonel de Moura Brizola. During the day the plaza is a market place where vendors sell food, clothes and other items, and during the night time on every third Friday, it is a scene with many break dancers and skaters ranging from ages 11-35 battle and hang out. Given that the ground is concrete, they lay out black and white checkered plastic like sheets in order to gain traction while dancing. The first Cypher na Rua I went to was a freestyle cypher where there were at least 5 different cyphers of young people gathered around each other freestyling. Some would informally battle. I would notice that during the freestyles the dancers would not only practice breaking, but also krumping, popping, and locking.

Illustration 5: Photo of organizers of Cypher na Rua. Raphina (left) and his cousin Zulu (right). Photo Credit: Jonathon Orta

Cypher na Rua is challenging the public sphere, a space usually for the state and public discourses, hence a very white male space. They are bringing young black and brown locals to these areas and redefining what these spaces mean and represent. Cypher na Rua, along with the following public spaces represent what Nancy Fraser calls the subaltern counterpublic, "arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses" (Fraser 1990, 67). It allows marginal cultural practitioners to create a dialogue between public discourse (Fraser 1990, 68-70). Michael Dawson agrees with Fraser arguing that public sphere is an "ideological claim since it privileges the bourgeois sphere as being the sphere" and that black counterpublics work in a similar way (Dawson 1995, 197-199). Dawson defines the black counterpublic sphere as male and patriarchal[8] arguing that in hip-hop, there can be "no mass –based

[8] Along with male and patriarchal, Dawson argues that the black counterpublic is also multiclass. This is through a U.S. black male lens.

Black counterpublic if Black women are continually denied the right to basic humanity and voice" (Dawson 1995, 217). I do agree with these complexities yet I still see young people disturbing the public sphere, with whatever gender and sexuality they identify with. Although it is important to highlight that in these spaces very few women actually battled or participated in a freestyle, some were selling clothing, others were photographers, and once I saw a woman who was a main judge throughout the battles. That is why both Fraser's and Dawson's interpretation of the counterpublic help me situate my research in a way that helps me explain the stances young black cariocas make in hip hop events. I also noticed that in these spaces they stimulate a local hip hop economy by utilizing these events to promote hip hop clothing brands and local food vendors. By contributing to a self-sustaining economy, young people in hip hop are creating a political economy through the means of claiming black identity and culture.

Illustration 6: Photo of break dancers posing in front of the Teatro Raulo Cortez at a Cypher na Rua event. Photo Credit: Jonathon Orta

Espaço Cultural Viaduto de Realengo- Realengo- Zona Oeste- Bridge

Espaço Cultural Viaduto de Realengo translates to Cultural Space under the Realengo bridge and is apart of the *perferia* of Rio de Janeiro and the actual bridge has benefitted this specific neighborhood beyond its transportation means. Realengo is far from the center of the city's luxuries, riches, and beaches. It sits in the middle of Zona Oeste, a part of Rio de Janeiro that many say the government has abandoned. Described as an ethnically diverse part of Rio, Zona Oeste has been recently "urbanized" given an advance in the economy. According to Dr. Lucia Guimares' report on Zona Oeste, this "diversity" attributed to the emergence of the middle class (white Brazilians), has created somewhat of a culture shock caused by globalization and capitalism (Guimares 2013, 4). She draws the connection with Rio's sports mega events, the displacement of families in Realengo due to the transportation changes, and social exclusion. Since the use of the bridge, Guimares argues that although it has improved traffic and it positively affected the population who does not drive. It is mostly common that people who live in Zona Oeste work either in Zona Sul or downtown, both areas which can take up to two hours of commute. However, this has affected the community in a cultural sense.

When walking down from the Supervia Realengo train station you can hear the bass of trap music and reggae almost every other night. This space is where people commute to and from home and are met with waves of young people skating on skateboards and longboards. Most residents living in a *periferia* like Zona Oeste, more specifically Realengo, pass by the events occurring in the opening of their neighborhood as they pass under the bridge to and from work. When talking to cultural organizers

Clieton and Oberdan, (both Realengo natives), they emphasize that one of the most important projects of Viaduto de Realengo Cultural Space is "Choque de Realidade" or Reality Shock. The purpose of Choque de Realidade is to present an alternative perspective to the reality of every day life in Zona Oeste through the lens of culture. They do this by coordinating and organizing events revolved around hip hop, reggae, rock, skating and motorcycle culture. Choque de Realidade almost always has a roda cultural at each of their events. There are about 4-5 rounds and the last rapper standing wins the audience's cred (accolades). Not only young people, but also families and children attended the events creating a space that welcomed the whole community. I would also argue that these spaces are not only spaces of counterpublic that emphasize locality, but also create an international dialogue through the black diaspora.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the black diaspora has manifested through providing "foundations for a cultural politics of identity among peoples of African descent in the Americas", and throughout the globe. Although identities are expressed under local conditions, they take "a diasporic dimension" sharing a global blackness (Gordon 1999, 285&294). These spaces of black cultural production are important for young black youth to reclaim this public space as theirs. The bridge is something they can call their own where new talent and ideas are always welcomed creating a safer space for them to express. Not only are they claiming these spaces as young people, but more importantly as young black people from the periphery. This is especially important given that black culture in Brazil has been seen as cultural and political threats. Specifically, hip hop scholar Tricia Rose notes that,

> "black urban teenagers are the most profound symbolic referent for internal threats to social order. Since rap music is understood as the predominant symbolic violence of black urban males, it heightens this sense of threat and reinforces dominant white middle class objections to urban black youths who do not aspire to white middle class standards" (Rose 1994,126).

This internal threat that the body of a young black male presents in hip hop as a genre in Brazil differs from other musical genres.

These bodies in hip hop culture carry meanings that either represent threats to the white elite or producers of culture to their community. The interpretation of the black male body as an internal threat has translated differently to each unique Afro-descendent culture in Brazil. Hip hop in Brazil has yet to undergo the process of cultural repackaging unlike samba that went through a period in which the state perceived the practice to be deviant. However, it became the national musical genre for Brazil and is an example of how the state appropriated black culture for national democracy. Whereas samba was rooted in black communities in Rio and first seen as deviant, it was then manipulated to be presentable to the white audiences. Hip hop has not shed that threat of deviancy. It has not been whitened enough for audiences, thus still presenting itself as a threat through the black male body as aggressor. "Urban black youth" represent the counterpublic, the unheard, the ones at the margins. Their survival and resilience through unapologetically claiming their identity through space and culture is what scares the white middle class. Because of this marginalization, black youth create their own subaltern public discourses to address their objectives, needs and strategies.

At the Viaduto de Realengo Espaço Cultural, this cultura da rua is embraced, celebrated and promoted. When the sun sets, it transforms from merely a place under the

bridge to Choque de Realidade. They are not under any surveillance or discrimination they may face outside of this space. This public space is transformed into a place to celebrate hip hop and community.

Illustration 7: Photo of MC Oz performing at a roda cultural in the Espaço Cultural Viaduto de Realengo Photo Credit: Jonathon Orta

Viaduto de Madureira

Under a different bridge every Saturday, black and brown youth meet under the Madureira bridge using hip hop and charme culture to celebrate blackness through the means of public space. Charme is a genre of hip hop that is translated to rhythm and blues (R&B) that was also a growing culture at that time and this neighborhood has embraced it. Madureira is located in the north zone of Rio de Janeiro and is historically known for its strong black cultural production. Madureira is a part of Rio with much industrial, commercial and residential development and with a population of almost 50,000 residents. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics 2010 census, in

the neighborhood of Madureira 8,183 residents self identified as black (preta) yet 18,908 identified as brown (parda) while 22,594 self identified as white (branco). Madureira contradicts the racial democracy argument that attempted to present a modern image of Brazil. In Madureira there seems to be no silence when it comes to race and black culture is embraced culturally and politically. Not only are people aware and conscious of their race, but also there have been a heightened number of people who are claiming black identity (IBGE 2010). As a nation, the number of people who identified as black and "mixed race" jumped from 44.7% to 50.1% in the 2010 census (Phillips 2011). According to the local D'Negro store owner located in Madureira, the celebration and claiming of black identity in Madureira has been growing since the 1970s and is where much of the Rio's black militant politics were born.

Not only does Madureira have a strong relation with hip hop and charme, but also with jongo, macuumba and samba, other cultural practices rooting from Brazil's population of African descent. Viaduto de Madureira is a public space organized by Espaço Cultural Rio Hip Hop Charme and Centro Cultural da CUFA Madureira (Takaki 2008, 127). Although it may seem like just a public place where people pass over through trains or by foot, it has become a space where hip hop and charme are symbols of new meanings of black culture in Madureira. It is directly underneath the Madureira Supervia and metro station and very close by the Mercadao da Madureira. The Viaduto de Madureira started as a "Projeto Charme na Rua" in the early 1990s where carioca hip hop was emerging. In 2000 is became "Projeto Rio Charme" and in 2003 it became "Espaço Cultural Rio Hip Hop Charme". The final locality of this project takes place at the

Viaduto de Madureira and sometimes at the Circo Voador in Lapa. Today the Viaduto de Madureira space is responsible for disseminating contemporary black culture all throughout the city. Young people from all parts of Rio, even including Baixada Fluminese go to the Viaduto to dance.

Literally under a bridge, you walk into the space and sometimes see hundreds of young people dancing choreography in a group. There are many lights, a stage in the back and various different DJ's. In front of the entrance there are various vendors selling food, cigarettes, and drinks. I went to the Viaduto at least 3 or 4 times during my time in Rio and I always saw groups of young people all dancing the same choreography. According to Pierry, a dancer in the Rio hip hop scene, and Yas, a local rapper, charme dancers meet at least once a week to teach each other the choreography in order to dance in these groups once at the parties. It is noteworthy how these spaces encourage young people to create other spaces outside the baile charmes.

The commodification of black culture and encouraged heteronormativity is a theme that dominated some hip hop spaces like the Viaduto. Furthermore I noticed a difference in entrance fee where that women pay R $5 and men pay R $10 to enter. This is a common occurrence in the United States as well, where men pay more and women pay less to enter a nightclub. This is to attract more women (who don't have to pay as much), and the men that are assumed to want to pay more in order to be around more women. This heteronormative business strategy is successful globally in any genre a venue has.

Although hip hop allows young people to claim their own space for not only leisure but to assert their power and pride in their black identity, how it is co-opted for profit cannot be ignored. Organizations like CUFA[9], an organization that promotes black cultural production, participate in profiting off of culture through these events. Based on my conversations with other hip hop organizers, some do not agree in paying for public space because it further enforces a culture of eliteness that informs a notion of "coolness". If you go to the Viaduto de Madureira it is because you can afford their definition of hip hop and charme. Paying a fee to enter the event under a heteronormative business model challenges the notion of the Viaduto de Madureira from being public space to being private space fitting into a societal gender norm. Given that this baile has been recognized by the Governo do Estado do Rio de Janeiro as an instrument essential for the culture of the neighbordhood, this might be an extension of the cultural appropriation of the Getulio Vargas model. Although not nationalized as a representation of the country, hip hop spaces play into this conception of cultural commodification through smaller organizations versus a government or business.

Private Space

The privately owned spaces with hip hop events that I visited in Rio de Janeiro included nightclubs and theaters offering artists access and mobility beyond hip hop. Although open to the public, the venues allow people who can afford to attend the shows and events. For the purpose of this project I will only focus on one place to analyze hip hop in the private space. These theaters and nightclubs all provide a different perspective

[9] Many hip hop organizers I spoke with contested CUFA's commodification of the hip hop culture

on hip hop than what was seen in the public spaces. For instance, the private spaces were inside of buildings instead of outside and thus blocking access to people walking by. I will analyze hip hop in one place in Meier, Zona Norte and the artist who performed, MC Sant. I call this theater a private space because although the public is welcome, only those who can afford a ticket can access the space.

Imperator Centro Cultural João Nogueria- Meier- Teatro

The Imperator João Nogueira Cultural Center is an initiative started by the Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro through the Secretary of Culture dedicated to culture and the diversity of the arts. The cultural center was opened in 1954 at Imperator theater in Meier, a neighborhood in the Zona Norte. According to the official website, it is considered the biggest cinema in all of Latin America. Nogueira was an infamous sambista born and raised in Meier who helped revitalize the carnival in Rio and created the Samba Clube[10].

I was invited by a young black artist to attend his show and conducted an interview right after the performance of MC Sant, a brilliant artist who consistently and intentionally utilizes the fifth element of hip hop: consciencia. He uses rap to promote literacy and consciousness. I gained access to that private event via his public performances.

I first met MC Sant at a hip hop event in the favela of Rocinha in the Zona Sul of Rio. We were invited by MC Oz, promoter, organizer and MC from Rocinha. It was an event called Encontro de Ideais e Rimas (Meeting of the Ideas and Rhymes) where there

[10]Source: "The Imperator Centro Cultural João Nogueira". http://www.imperator.art.br/home.html

were MC battles called Batalhas de Conhecimento, break battles, kids practicing skateboarding, and a DJ set. This event was in an open and public space that looked like a basketball or futsal court in the opening of the favela. I actually happened to meet MC Oz at an event earlier that month at a Roda Cultural at the Viaduto de Realengo Centro Cultural. Through Rio de Janeiro's hip hop solidarity networks all around the city, I was able to move through these spaces and learn from these artists.

MC Sant was performing in Rocinha that day with havaianas and a chain around his neck. He did not look like your average carioca MC, especially with the amount of exposure he was getting. When he got on the mic he quickly captivated the audience having the young people of Rocinha ages 5-25 reciting his lyrics. After his performance, he was selling his CDs for $2 reais, a price considered pretty cheap considering his rising fame. After buying one, I obtained his contact information and I went to his shows located at nightclubs and theaters. It was through his public performances that I was able to access the private spaces that welcomed hip hop.

Race and gender play a subtle yet important role in private spaces where hip hop is present, like the Imperator. At the theater, Sant performed in a collaborative show called "Rio Musica Contemporeana no Imperator", a show intended to expose the audience to the new carioca music scene. He shared the stage with various different artists, including Mart'nalia, Zona Norte's famous black queer samba singer. The audience was mostly white, except for MC Sant's crew and supporters standing in front closest to the stage. Because of Mart'nalia's success, I did not get a feeling that people seemed to be phased by her sexuality and gender performance. She is a queer black woman samba singer that

is successful and whose father was also a successful. Whether success implies tolerance is a question I will explore further in the next and last chapter focusing on gender and hip hop in Rio.

Just because MC Sant's was in a private space, he did not shy away from utilizing the fifth element of hip hop. At the end of his set, MC Sant did what he always does at the end of his shows or battles, enact his project "Projeto Livrar" with his hip hop collective VVAR (Vamos Voltar A Realidade). Projeto Livrar is a project he and his collective started as a way to promote literacy amongst hip hop youth. He brings livros (books) in order for the young people to levar (take), hence the name Livrar (livro+levar). The books are donated by local poets and VVAR give them away at their events to support readership of their work and encourage literacy. MC Sant, along with the infamous MC Marechal, also have initiated and hosted Rio de Janeiro's Batalha de Conhecimento, translated as, Battles of Consciousness. VVAR attempts to redefine an MC battle. Whereas battles often tend to put down rappers, Batalhas de Conhecimento encourages cyphers to have substance to the words. In this Batalha de Conhecimento, rappers are given a set of words written on a whiteboard and in their freestyle they are challenged to use this set of words. The words are usually connected to themes of social justice such as "favela", "justiça" "revolução" "conscienca", and even "copa mundial". The wittiest rapper wins the battle. VVAR has held their battles all over the city but most recently has concentrated in holding them downtown at the Museo de Arte do Rio where they are also challenging spaces assumed to be held by the elite.

This is reminiscent of what artist Helio Oticica used to do, where he held his art installations at museums covering themes of injustice and marginality while inviting his whole favela of Mangueira to join him, during the dictatorship.

MC Sant and his collective, VVAR are reclaiming theaters and museums, yet still performing at public spaces at no cost. His humility and drive captures young carioca hip hop heads. Not only is he "keeping it real" through his music and projects, but he is benefitting from the budding carioca hip hop economy. He both sells his CD's and VVAR merchandise and performs at one of the biggest theaters in Latin America alongside legends. He is versatile and can adapt to his environment easily.

Illustration 8: Photo of Mart'nalia (middle) with Sant (right) at the Imperator. Photo Credit: Jonathon Orta

Black youth in these spaces are presenting their work for professional and artistic exposure while contributing to a dialogue about reclaiming spaces that is historically exclusively white. His peers, like MC Sistah, believes that it is necessary to be present

and vocal in these spaces that have traditionally been for the white middle class and elite. This is imperative given that "the production of black spaces in the diaspora is tied to locations that were and are explicitly produced in conjunction with race, racism, captivity and economic profit" (McKittrick 2006, 9). Theaters and entertainment have been a place of not only exclusion, but of structural violence against the black body. When young black man like Sant captivates an audience on stage, he is also redefining that space under his terms and presents an influential stance of self-empowerment. In the United States, black minstrelsy was the first opportunity for black people to enter the show business arena where it depicted racist stereotypes of black people. They were designed to "pander to white racism and to make whites feel comfortable with-indeed entertained by- racial oppression" (Alexander 2012, 168). In the U.S. rap has been critiqued to this type of minstrelsy. In Brazil rap is not as commercialized thus does not seem to utilize blackface through the means of hip hop, however it is widely known that blackface is still used in contemporary Brazilian media and street performance.

Despite the statistics going against artists like Sant, they are still performing as a form of resistance. At the Imperator, MC Sant is on stage as a black young male spitting his realities along legends and to a mostly white audience. However I feel like he is performing for his homies and community up in the front of the stage cheering him along. His performance was a way for him to reclaim the space that was not meant for him and his people to be in a respected in. Rap as a socio-political platform critiques the modernist project and rappers serve as griots or politicians denouncing the struggles lived in urban areas or the periphery (Rocha 2012b, 21). Sant does this knowing his

positionality as a young black male. Living in a country in which Dr. João Vargas likes to describe race as a "pregnant silence", it is an elephant in the room that few mainstream and powerful networks address. Systems of inequalities in Brazil disproportionately affect the black population where 33.2% of Brazilians are black and in poverty. Thousands of black youth are being killed. (Alves 2009, 615). So its not that race doesn't exist or being talked about, it's that systematic powers make it seem that these black bodies are disposable and not human. Not only is this a genocide of the black population, but a continuum of the lynching era. Sant and his crew VVAR reverse this dynamic and utilize this historically exclusive and often symbolically violent setting, a theater, and spin it on its head. He is not supposed to be there. He is supposed to be dead, imprisoned or drugtrafficking. According to Ignacio Cano, black people in Brazil are 3 times more likely to be killed by the police than any other population (Cano 2010). Growing up in a social and economic disadvantaged position, Sant, along with many other hip hop artists say that hip hop saved his life. His existence and continuous efforts of community work is resisting a system that not only does not want him to succeed, but is constantly and tirelessly criminalizing people just like him. So performing in a theater meant for white elites, to me, is challenging cultural hegemony. When interviewing Sant refers to what Public Enemy calls rap as black people's CNN. Hip hop artists are modern day journalists for their community.

Young black artists in Rio like MC Sant play multiple roles in the hip hop movement. As a community leader he resists and challenges cultural hegemony through his multiple projects. He performs in a variety of places giving him exposure beyond his

own community. To his real black and brown audience in Bangu, Rocinha and other marginalized areas of the city, he is a truth teller and mentor through his music. As an entrepreneur he profits off of his culture that includes politics of neoliberalism and capitalism within hip hop. Consumers buy aesthetics of blackness in a society where "blackness gets attached to bodies, goods, ideas and aesthetic practices in the visual sphere" (Fleetwood 2011, 20). It is a "commoditized hybridity" where race, class, gander, sexuality, nation and culture are within a totalizing logic of neoliberalism (Fleetwood 2011, 156). At times within hip hop, products, brands, and in this case music become racialized and often criminalized-then appropriated. To white audiences in the Imperator, he is an entertainer that has exposed them to his coded and rehearsed reality he was paid to perform. At nightclubs where it is $10 reais to get in at Cascadura, he is a hip hop militant, representative of the carioca hip hop "hype", and local celebrity. He is code switching his roles in order to represent what hip hop is becoming in Brazil. It is becoming a window to a reality that white people pay to see for a 10 minute set. On the other of the spectrum hip hop is still a reality and form of empowerment for those young people living on the margins. It is also becoming an entrepreneurship with opportunity to push brands, projects and clothing that represent an idea. These are the conversations young artists who are marginalized face. In order for him to continue to do free shows in different favelas, comunidades and periferias free of cost to his REAL audience, he must do shows in theaters where his audience sees him as an entertainer versus a teacher- in order to survive as an artist.

Sant and other black artists in Rio from the *periferia*, negotiate their art in order to survive and promote a culture that has saved them. Black death is built within an oppressive system where these black youth are not only surviving, but also challenging space as an act of shaking up the hegemonic cage. Black youth's power within this cultural movement is seen as a threat and motivates fear into the patriarchal white supremacist system. Young people of color globally will continue to conquer spaces, private or public, in order to get their message heard through whatever means. Hip hop in Rio has proven itself in having no hope in ever dying, yet continue to grow through artists like MC Sant.

Illustration 9: Photo of MC Sant. Photo Credit: Jonathon Orta

NGO Spaces

During my fieldwork research, I visited and analyzed three non-governmental organizations that welcome hip hop culture. They were located in the periferia of Morro Agudo in Baixada Fluminese as well as in the favelas Batan and Vila Aliança. In this section I briefly describe two NGO spaces and analyze the third uncategorized space. These places offer young people a space to create and practice hip hop through the fifth element.

Movimento Enraizados- Nova Iguaçu, Baixada Fluminese

Movimento Enraizados is located in Baixada Fluminese, an area outside of Rio de Janeiro that is marginalized by the state. According to the interview I had with Dudu Morro de Agudo, founder of Enraizados, this organization upholds three elements in its mission: formação, communicação, intercambio. They focus on cultural militancy and artistic activism through hip hop production, performances and poetry. They are active in the neighborhood of Morro Agudo in the city of Nova Iguaçu. Given that Baixada Fluminese is legally not considered apart of the city of Rio de Janeiro, it has been extremely difficult for organizations like Movimento Enraizados to gain funding. According to coordinator and actor Luiz Dumont, there are almost no resources for cultural projects in the Baixada Fluminese because it is located far from the state's political interests. Many residents of Baixada Fluminese migrated from the favelas of Rio to this *periferia*. Dumont notes that police corruption and violence has motivated the displacement of cariocas towards the peripheric communities of Baixada. However the violence in Baixada also involve *milicias*, paramilitary groups and death squads who

were known as *mão branco, mão pelada,* and *policia minera* in the recent decades. Hip hop militancy is born in Baixada Fluminese from the community's drive to create community despite the violence.

When I arrived to Rio in May, Dudu informed me of Enraizado's struggle to keep their physical NGO space. They simply did not have the funds anymore to afford the rent they needed to maintain the space. The space was a large lot with vibrant graffiti work created by the students. To the left was a stage, a temporary library, and an out of use media lab. To the right was an office space, a music studio and a kitchen. Movimento Enraizados was in the middle of a huge move from a larger space to a smaller office and public space takeover. Dudu and Dumont were paying out of pocket in order to keep the space alive before deciding to move. In the past Enraizados was funded through the Ministry of Culture's *Ponots de Cultura,* a program that promoted cultural initiatives.

After some tough decisions, they moved to a smaller office closer to the Supervia station with quick access to the community plaza by August 2014. After talking to Dudu and two young participants, they all agreed that the smaller space was actually more effective for the organization. Mylie, an MC and participant of Enraizado's hip hop school thinks the new smaller space will bring more opportunities for events and *rodas* in the Praça Morro Agudo. Their poetry and hip hop events will move between the small NGO space and a public plaza, taking hip hop back closer to the streets. This movement between NGO and public space is a stimulating dynamic as it brings the working class neighborhood physically closer to the organization and their ideologies.

Illustration 10: Photo of Movimento Enraizados former space. Photo Credit: Jonathon Orta

Caixa de Surpresa- Vila Aliança, Bangu

Caixa de Surpresa is a cultural arts organization in the favela of Vila Aliança in the neighborhood of Bangu in Zona Oeste. According to some of the residents, Vila Alianca is completely abandoned by the state and a place social services do not wish to assist parts of Zona Oeste in general. Walking through Vila Aliança is sometimes described as walking through a war zone by Zona Oeste residents. Drug trafficking is much more visible where I saw many *bocas*, where drugs are sold, and many foot soldiers with walkie talkies and guns. Caixa de Surpresa sits at the opening of the favela, in front of a bridge where there are many people living there. The poverty of Vila Aliança is evident as well as the violence. The night before my first time visiting the organization, I was told that three youth were shot. Other times I would attend the events I could hear

the crossfires during the hip hop shows. Unlike the scholarship available on other favelas of Rio, Vila Aliança is actually not run by the UPP. Most violence is caused by the crossfire of the police and traffickers. The UPP, Unidade de Policia Pacificadora, was officially launched in 2009 after pilot programs were tested in the favela of Santa Marta. Instead of invading communities, the UPP is intended to serve as police units inside communities to retake these territories to combat drug trafficking and crime (Cano 2012, 6). Although there has been much appraisal by the media and government, researchers such as Ignacio Cano study the affects the UPP has on different communities. People apart of the community of Vila Aliança and collaborators of the community explained that it is a geographically flatter favela where violence is played out more distinctly than in a favela that is on a *morro* (hill). This may contribute to why UPP has not been placed there given the logistical strategies that need to be further studied. Caixa de Surpresa is located at the opening of the favela, inviting both the community members and those outside of Vila Aliança to their organization.

According to Caixa's coordinator, Leidy Machado, Caixa de Surpresa was founded by Waldemir Correa to bring young people together and talk about social issues through theater, music, and dance. Caixa de Surpresa's spatial story is one of many geographical movements. It was an idea that began in 1982 in Bangu and was put into practice in 1997 in Duque de Caxias. Given that Leidy was born and raised in Vila Aliança, she feels that the most powerful work has been when Caixa moved back to Vila Aliança in 1999. At that time, the organization had no financial support or a space to continue their efforts and address the communities' needs.

Leidy Machada along with other Caixa leaders have been able to adapt their services to the community's needs. During that time, the community of Vila Aliança was concerned about sexual education of young black women. Leidy led a program where young black girls were able to meet and talk about the importance of their sexuality and the value of a woman's body. Given that they had no NGO space, they started these groups meeting in Leidy's backyard with f only a few girls attending for a month at first. By the end of the weekly classes, a classical dance interpretation of their conversations was performed for the community. Now that the project was over, Leidy thought that the girls would not have returned. To her surprise, she found the participants along with more girls returning on her doorstep the next day with lots of energy to continue to work on another piece. This is the moment that Leidy realized the power that the organization had and gave several opportunities for expression for community. After that moment, the young people worked with theater and readings discussing themes of their community often led by the young people themselves. During this time she assisted many of the meetings, met with the young girls' parents and often served as a support system for the participants. In 2000 she led the young girls to a retreat of young black women. Leidy, a white woman, led the young black girls on this trip, given that she was the only woman participating on the coordinating team of Caixa de Surpresa. I think she recognized her white privilege and used it to gain funding for the organization through grant applications and networking.

Illustration 11: Photo of a tag at the Caixa de Surpresa space. Photo Credit: J. Diaz-Hurtado

Caixa de Surpresa has a history of physically moving in between spaces given their financial and social situation. Between 2000-2010 they were able to get sponsors such as Global Fund for Children and university support where they were finally able to rent a space for the organization and its activities. Owned by religious practitioners, the space was shared amongst other community members and resulted in ideological disputes. Caixa had been providing capoeira classes to the young people and the owners did not approve of that practice. To the owners, Capoeira was connected to Afro-descendent religions such as Macumba or Candomble. I was not made aware of the race or religion of the people who owned that other space. These disagreements resulted in the organization moving their activities to the streets. In 2008, the organization was practicing a drum activity on the street and a young girl noticed an abandoned building that overlooked the bridge where many people lived under. The young girl said she

wanted that abandoned space for Caixa. After she mentioned that idea to the director, Mimi, he went to that abandoned building along with a crew to clean it up. They reclaimed that abandoned space as a way to reclaim themselves as a community and organization. Members of that community constructed this space to what is known today as the Espaço Cultural Caixa de Surpresa. The community of Vila Aliança negotiated this space as a displaced group and agrees to 'squat' indefinitely until they are kicked out. They took control into their own hands and use that abandoned space for positive change. The space is used to practice theater pieces, capoeira, drum practices, and now hip hop. They use hip hop in order to promote social justice and as a way to address the community's concerns and thoughts.

Illustration 12: Caixa de Surpresa space. Still from *Ta Ligado: Rodas e Hip Hop no Rio*

Uncategorized Space- UPP/Street/Rented Space- Batan, Realengo

Jovens de Periferia is an organization that embraces hip hop and moves through public and state sponsored spaces that requires an analysis of spatial negotiation. Located

in the west side of Rio in the favela of Batan, this group of young people focus on *passinho*, breaking, and hip hop dance. Although I visited once, the manner in which the group moved through space in their community was a testament to their commitment to hip hop. I was invited by the graffiti artist of Realengo, IRAK, to Batan because he was contracted to create a piece for the group in their new dance studio. When walking into the dance studio, the lead instructor of the group was rehearsing with the group of 20 young black and brown kids excited to practice. After talking with them, IRAK started his piece and all of us moved to the street to continue our conversations. The group still needed to practice and IRAK's spraycan fumes made it a bit difficult. The instructor told us that they sometimes use the local UPP center to rehearse their dances. This definitely stuck out to me as something odd given the history of UPP and Batan.

The reputations the UPP has gained throughout Rio are mostly negative but depend on who is affected. In 2008, a year before the UPP was implemented in Batan, the favela was run by militia gangs. Most of the west side, according to MC Ernesto Mike Charlie and MC Slow da BF, are still run by militias. Batan made international news after the militia in Batan kidnapped and tortured undercover journalists from the well known newspaper, *O Dia* (Barrionuevo 2008). Shortly after, the UPP was implemented in the neighborhood. According to Cano's study, 93% of residents from Batan and Cidade de Deus feel safe since the UPP arrived. 57% of residents living in favelas with UPP in general feel like the UPP brought an "uncomfortable order" to their neighborhood and 70% agree that the implementation of the UPP has a strong correlation with the mega events such as the World Cup and World Olympics. Before the 2014 World Cup, Rio de

Janeiro attempted to implement 40 more UPP's all over the city. Although some feel safer, there are at least 56% of residents who still have a negative sentiment towards the UPP. Although this study shows a decrease in homicides and petty crime, the number of disappearances has almost doubled. Cano suggests that the correlation between homicides and disappearances is a statistic that should keep the reader and resident cautious on the definitions of those terms (Cano 2012, 8). Brazilians are aware of the negative effects the UPP had over their communities. One famous example is the disappearance of respected black resident of Rocinha, Amarildo de Souza in July 2013. An alleged investigation of drug trafficking incident initiated by the UPP, resulted in the disappearance, torture and murder of Amarildo by the UPP. In October 2013 there was a charge filed against the officers of the UPP involved with the homicide (Bowater 2013).

Before entering the UPP Batan center, we had to negotiate to enter this space with the agents of the state of obvious oppression. The instructor, a resident of Batan, talked with the skeptical UPP officers before they let 3 Americans in with cameras. After the group leader explained to the officers about the project and introduced us, we walked in ready to explore a space I had heard so often about. During this time, the instructor would explain to us that although some people have negative perceptions about the UPP, a positive aspect in their community was the use of the space for rehearsals while their new space was slowly being set up. He also described to us that the UPP center in Batan supposedly used to be an ex-druglord's house. This explained the various gunshot holes still visible in the building. Regardless of the intimidation we felt in that space, the young people seemed very comfortable and were used to practicing around UPP officers. They

were very excited to meet and talk with us about dancing, life in their community and the United States.

Illustration 13: Photo of Joven de Periferia space (under construction). This was the piece IRAK was starting to create. Photo Credit: Korie Ferguson.

The spaces I included in this chapter are just a few I visited that worked with hip hop and young people in Rio de Janeiro. As mentioned before, this chapter is a reflection of the observances I made regarding gender, space, race and sexuality within the carioca hip hop movement. Young black artists and community leaders are constantly negotiating and carving out different spaces for empowerment. Artsits like Sant are playing different roles in the spaces he enters in order to stay true and authentic to his community while taking advantage of the capitalization of hip hop. Hip hop fashion entrepreneurs are not so different as they utilize this growing economy while also contribute to the cycles of

the local black economy. Youth in certain favelas are negotiating with agents of the state while transitioning spaces despite the violence and genocide the agents represent. And other leaders in communities are reclaiming abandoned spaces and essentially going beyond squatting, to declaring space on their own terms. These stances of resistance and solidarity are speaking towards the innate nature of hip hop, a culture of spreading the political voice of the young black artists and speaking truths through the activism these artists enact. These artists do not only voice hip hop's message, but support it through their actions by claiming space. I hope to have this analysis serve as an extension of the video project *Ta Ligado: Rodas e Hip Hop no Rio*.

Chapter 3: Marginality within the periphery: Gender and Sexuality in Brazilian Hip Hop

As a female researcher and practitioner of hip hop, it is pertinent to understand the gendered social and political history of the locality I am studying. In male dominated spaces, there are already power structures put in place to oppress those who do not identify as a heterosexual white male. This chapter will mainly focus on women in hip hop and its development in Brazil. According to DJ TR's *Acorda Hip Hop!*, 20% of the people participating in the Brazilian hip hop scene are women. Although the book was written almost 5 years ago, this statistic has not changed much. I will also briefly address the presence of young queer artists within Brazil's hip hop movement. Like the rest of the artists, women and people identifying as queer continue to carve out space to express themselves in male dominated hip hop spaces in the heteropatriarchal culture in Brazil writ large. Specifically for black and brown queer people and women, they are on the periphery within the peripheral communities. To be at the margins of the margins puts someone in a position of disadvantage, and here I focus in how hip hop articulates this position, as well as how it talks back from it. As aforementioned, women in hip hop are scarce, and some of the women who are in the community are behind the scenes. At the events I attended, the women present who weren't practicing a hip hop art were either, hip hop dancers, skaters, served as hosts of MC battles or accompanying their partner. Out of the 21 people I interviewed, 5 of them were women. I fully analyze three interviews in this chapter. I aim to address this perspective and hope to discuss the issues of what it is like being a marginalized person within a peripheral community. I also look

at the constraints of these hip hop spaces for women regarding, group names, dominant construction of gender performance, and religion.

Given the lack of women present in the movement, my personal experience in the hip hop spaces did affect my research at first. Yet it changed as I developed my project. Almost every time I walked into a hip hop space, it was overwhelmingly male and masculine. Because I am light-skinned and have a foreigner status, I knew I carried certain privileges in those spaces that affected my interactions with people. My gender also affected how I was perceived in these male dominated spaces. I was first seen as my gender versus my status as a researcher. I knew going into this research that it would be like this, but not to that extent. I was with my partner during most events and interviews, and as a male, most people seemed to respect and listen to him more than me in the beginning of the project. Perhaps my Portuguese wasn't as fluent as his, but then again that didn't stop them from trying to hit on me at different times. This eventually stopped after a couple of weeks once they noticed I was working with my partner. If I were alone in this situation, it would have been harder to be taken seriously as a researcher. Having a male companion was not only safer, but also helpful for the project. Every time I saw another woman in the space as a performer, dancer, or visual artist I would feel a little safer and more interested on how women moved through these spaces.

Gwendolyn Pough's idea of "bringing wreck" and Michael Dawson's theory of black counter publics draw similar parallels where both are rooted in reshaping the public gaze as seen through historical forms of resistance. According to Gwendolyn Pough's *Check It While I Wreck It: Black Womanhood, Hip Hop Culture, and the Public Sphere*,

women are the main contributors to bringing "wreck" into hip hop culture. She describes bringing wreck for black people in the public sphere as:

> "reshaping the public gaze in such a way as to be recognized as human beings. As functioning and worthwhile members of society- and not to be shut out of or pushed away from the public sphere" (Pough 2004, 17).

Bringing wreck for black women in hip hop creates subaltern counterpublic discourses as a way of survival to wreck the stereotypes about them and the marginalization that comes along with it (Pough 2004, 87). Michael Dawson's theory of black counterpublics and the connection with hip hop advocates that there can be no mass based black counter public if women are denied and stripped of their rights. Echoing Dawson's assertion, there were not many women in the hip hop scene and often mainstream hip hop objectifies and oversexualizes black women. This is why black women in hip hop empower themselves and their community by redirecting the gaze within the public sphere. (Dawson 1995). Redirecting the gaze has historically been a revolutionary act, a tool borrowed from the Black Panther Party and other Black Power groups in the United States. The Panthers did this by using spectacle and cultural representation as a way to attain political and social goals. They grabbed national attention through their clothing, tone of voice, and conviction in rhetoric to present a revolutionary image to "not only capture the mainstream American imagination but to also attract the masses of Black people". The civil rights movement performed similar actions through their vision of respectability in order to enter into the public sphere (Pough, 20-25).

Women in hip hop in the United States have been subjected to sexual exploitation and oppression that mute their voices and image, yet they challenge this notion through their art thus redefining feminism. Many black women in hip hop find empowerment through exploring black feminist issues within this genre. Seen as the "cultural workers/bearers", black women are at the intersection of Western feminism and Black Nationalism leading them to create their own movements. In hip hops case, it is through hip hop feminism that misogyny is challenged (Hill-Collins 2006). However it is also important to note that hip hop feminism is closely tied to black feminisms and everyday feminism rooted in racial, immigrant and working class lived experiences. In a diasporic sense, scholar Keisha Khan Perry would call this hip hop feminism, diaspora feminism, where women in the black diaspora construct identities across various racial and gender communities (Keisha-Khan 2009). In Brazil, scholar Vivian Santiago studies Recife's women in hip hop and argues that Black women activists in the hip hop movement, specifically in Recife, base their theories on the Brazilian feminist movement (Santiago da Silva 2014). Therefore, hip hop feminism and diasporic black feminism are directly related. Patricia Hill Collins also suggests that black feminists often choose media as a political avenue to address the public sphere as a new version of personal politics. Thus the different artistic and media driven forms of this hip hop help redefine feminism on the artists' terms.

Sexism and controlling images in hip hop are not a U.S. phenomena and exist everywhere in everyday situations despite class, gender, race and preferred genre of music. Patricia Hill Collins deconstructs these controlling images in *Black Feminist*

Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment. Stemming from the slave era, these controlling images are:

> "dynamic and changing, each provid[ing] a starting point for examining new forms of control that emerge in a transnational context, one where selling images has increased in importance in the global marketplace "(Hill Collins 2000; 79).

The images of the mammie and jezebel for black women mirror hip hop's mother/hoe binary. Whereas the mammie portrays the nurturing maternal behavior that whites expect from black women, the jezebel represent the deviant sexual behavior of a whore (Hill-Collins 2000, 73-80). This is translated into the cultural hegemony in hip hop deeming women of color to be unworthy, a hoe, bitch or else dichotomized as a mother or queen. Many women challenge these roles or redefine these terms (Pough 2004, 93). In hip hop these images are manifested in a capitalistic society to profit off of the black and brown woman's body and representation. This mother/hoe binary is something also common in Brazil. In an interview with MC Mara by DJ TR, MC Mara observes that because hip hop lives in a capitalist world it falls prey to the vices of capitalism that feed off of oppressions such as sexism and racism. She expresses the view that these issues are not resolved within the movement and that women in hip hop sometimes encounter feeling like they are under a microscope regarding sexuality and gender performance (Leal 2009, 306). In Nilma Figuereido de Almeida's study of women in the carioca hip hop scene, she found that carioca women entered the movement around the early 1990s. It seems that women first entered through the means of dance in many hip hop and baile charme parties. This is parallel to how hip hop entered Brazil in general, through dance. She interviewed Edwiges dos Santos, one of the founders of As Damas do Rap, who says that

when women like her began entering the rap circles and performed at shows and would receive strong sexist and violent reactions. The audience would yell "Piranha! Piranha!"[11] while they were performing on stage (Figuereido de Almeida 2010, 7). I argue that this occurred not only because they were women, but also because they were black women. Their expression is limited given the historical exploitation of the female black body all throughout the diaspora.

Group names and monikers used by female hip hop artists in Rio is a way to claim their marginalized identity within this peripheral culture. It is important to point out that "As Dama do Rap" name used the word "Damas". Whereas other groups like Racionais MC's, Thaide & Hum, among others, did not denote their gender or sexuality in their moniker, these women did. Other young female hip hop groups that I didn't get the chance to interview for this research project, also use names that described their gender such as Ladies Gangs and Pearls Negras. Ladies Gangs is an all young black women hip hop group from Mangueirinhos, Zona Norte of Rio de Janeiro. They focus mostly on dancing, rapping and fashion and are also seen as local leaders within their community. According to their interview with *O Globo*, their lyrics focus on everyday struggles in the favela. One of the members also emphasizes the struggle of being on stage as a woman given that many expect them to just "shake their ass" instead of spittin on the mic (Moreira 2014). Pearls Negras, a funk/hip-hop group are also emphasizing their femininity and race in their name, and rose to international stardom in 2014. From

[11] Slang for "slut".

Vidigal in Zona Sul, they also note that they must carve out their own space in Rio de Janeiro in order to get recognized as good artists (Rolling Stone 2014).

Figuereido conducted another interview in this study with Nega Gizza. "Nega", from what I was told, derives from a northeastern form of endearment to refer to black women, but is also derogatory when said by a non-black person or by black person in a pejorative way. The name, Nega Gizza, is not only referring to her gender, but also to her race like the Pearls Negras. Women who referred to their gender, race, and other forms of identification in their monikers was a way to let the scene know that a black woman was coming on stage to redefine their stereotypes assigned to the black female body, to reshape the gaze and bring wreck. Nega Gizza was one of the pioneers for women in hip hop in Rio de Janeiro. In the early 2000s, she won several Hutuz awards, a renowned award created by Central Unica das Favelas (CUFA). She also started a project called Maria Maria through CUFA where black women from the periphery organized and met to discuss how young black women can become politicized. They also used hip hop as a vehicle for their organization. Similar to Edwiges' experiences as a rapper, Nega Gizza found it to be hard for women to participate in the movement. However she sees things slowly changing for the better for women who want to participate. The young black and brown women I interviewed in 2014 differed in their responses depending on their own background and experience in the movement.

Mylie, a local multi-disciplined hip hop artist from Rio's periphery of Baixada Fluminese, starts out her interview saying that she represents a *força feminina no rap* (feminine force in rap). After hanging out with Mylie, I realized how much of an

independent young woman she is. She is in her last year of high school, working a job designing theater costumes, doing shows as a rapper at different *rodas* and events, and living on her own. Her ambition is strong and so is her talent. Mylie is a DJ, dancer, graffiti writer, rapper, surfer, skater and fashion designer. Although a reggae lover, she prefers hip hop because she says you are able to dive in and manifest your thoughts in your art. As a student in Morro Agudos' Movimento Enraizados hip hop school, she is a skilled lyricist who thinks there are very few women in the world of rap in Rio. Although the women she does know she says, are real MC's who battle and don't front on hip hop culture. At first, she said it was hard to enter into the hip hop scene as a girl. But now, she can see that "women are conquering spaces and that Enraizados taught her and her classmates the importance of equality amongst rappers." Other elements, particularly breakdancing and graffiti writing, also lack visibility of women artists.

In the graffiti world, Mylie has yet to meet other girls. In her experience most girls go tagging with their boyfriends and they help, but she has yet to meet a girl that does her work on her own. Personally, I never saw women in hip hop engage in graffiti writing at the events I attended. Also, it is more difficult to point out the gender of the visual artist, as graffiti is rendered in a culture of coding. As far as breakdancing, she has only met one bgirl at the events she has attended. However, most of the performances she has attended have been limited to Baixada Fluminese with a few exceptions. When at a Cypher na Rua event I saw one bgirl, and she was a judge. It appeared she was somewhat of a pioneer in the breaking scene and people valued her opinion highly. Although

equality is promoted in organizations Mylie participates in, the lack of visibility of women in hip hop still pursues.

Illustration 14: Picture of Mylie in the studio. Photo by Jonathon Orta

MC Sistah Mo Respect, a MC and reggae artist from Zona Norte bairro Parada de Lucas, has a bit of a different story. She comes from a family of musicians, specifically capoeristas. I met MC Sistah Mo Respect only one time at MC Sant's show at the Imperator Theater in Meier. She explains that in her experience, she was never discriminated against and was always welcomed and supported by her friends and fellow male artists. What was a challenge for her was to see a lack of women within the hip hop scene. According to her, the women that she did see assumed masculine gender performance in their music to feel accepted, such as being aggressive in their music and wearing baggy clothes. Black studies scholars Imani Perry and Nicole Fleetwood argue that,

> "Many women who participate as consumers and rappers in hip hop identify with the signs of heterosexual masculinity in hip hop fashion. Perry argues that some

> female hip hop artists and consumers choose to wear what is perceived to be masculine fashion as a 'response against the codes of white and racialized femininity'" (Fleetwood 2011, 161; Perry 2004).

Although the performance of masculinity responds to the status quo on what a black woman should look like, Sistah and Negga Gizza said many women did that in order to feel accepted amongst men at first. At least amongst women who are first starting out, that was a way into the community. What MC Sistah Mo Respect wants to see are women thriving in the scene embracing their femininity without stereotypes. Taking on masculine traits goes beyond being accepted amongst the hip hop community and speaks towards the notions of the power of these traits. Yas also points out what Sistah Mo Respect said, where women would imitate the way men performed in order to gain the same space and respect that men would. Fleetwood argues that the, "The black visual has been framed as masculine, which has positioned the black female visual as its excess" (Fleetwood 2011). This notion of excess flesh is a term developed by Fleetwood where black female corporeality is reduced to an excessive overdetermination (Fleetwood 2011, 9). Black women as excess implies that they are not the focus of the black visual, and instead are often sexualized and seen as accessories. Fleetwood's argument about black women as excess can be applied to hip hop as well. Thus women in the hip hop movement dressing in masculine baggy clothes redirect the focus towards them and their words instead of their bodies, thus gaining power.

Illustration 15: Photo of Sistah Mo Respect. Photo Credit: Jonathon Orta

DJ TR's interview with MC Calcinha in *Acorda Hip Hop!*, expresses that men were afraid that women would take their place in the hip hop movement (Leal 309). To these young males, these women did not belong in their circles. Soon that would change in the 2000s, as men would incorporate them into their groups or take them under their wings, like MV Bill did with Kmila CDD. Today, the most known woman rappers in the hip hop scene are Flora Matos, from Brasilia, and Karol Conka from Curitiba. Interestingly, the women dominating the hip hop scene are not from the state of São Paulo, giving room for women outside of the hip hop mecca in Brazil to thrive as solo artists.

Yas Werneck, a young MC and singer from Ancheita, Zona Norte echoes a relationship with feminism and sexism that is similar for other marginalized women. She started with an all girl Christian Rap group called JB, where they sang and rapped in churches and sometimes at non-religious events. She went solo after one of the women had a child, and the other pursued her own musical career. Yas claims that hip hop

culture is masculine and there are few women participants in all aspects in Rio de Janeiro. Like Mylie, she agrees that they are making more space for themselves and gaining more respect. When she started out in the group, there were a lot of stereotypes placed upon them with regards to the content of their music. Given that they are women, they were expected to sing, versus rap, and focus their lyrics on light and "fun" topics.

Although Yas expresses that the discrimination within the hip hop movement still existing, she hesitates to identify with feminism. Yas says that it is common for women to start rapping through joining all male rap crews, making it more difficult to express femininity. During the interview she says that, "it's as if it's never enough because we are women. We have to work twice as hard as men do to prove that we can do it ". She also emphasizes that this isn't only a phenomenon that happens in hip hop, it happens in every day situations and places such as the work place. Yas does not claim to be a feminist, because she says that she valorizes the self. After much observation she feels that it is important for women to valorize themselves. Many hip hop events she goes to she notices that many girls have a different focus outside of the self, such as boys and drinking. Although Yas does not identify as a feminist, her art seems to have feminist interventions.

Some marginalized women do not identify as feminist because typically for women of color from working class backgrounds, this connotation of feminism is perceived to be a white women movement. According to Patricia Hill Collins, everyday feminism was not seen as 'feminist work' done by marginalized women as "none learned to name the behavior of the women in their lives as 'feminist' until they encountered the

term within formal women studies programs" (Hill Collins 2006, 188). Because Black women's everyday actions were not considered as political and often seen as "maternal politics" it is often perceived as a lesser form of women's politics to Western feminism (Hill Collins 2006, 141). Black feminism reflects the struggles of women more accurately worldwide, thus it is no surprise that women within the hip hop generation follow the ideologies of Chicana, Puerto Rican and Black feminisms portrayed in the 1960s and 1970s. I would even further that argument and say that they are redefining the term towards including contemporary issues such as migration, racism, and sexuality using media as a means to spread their message.

Sueli Carneiro, black Brazilian founder of Geledes, poses strong questions and calls for the redefinition of feminism within Latin America. Carneiro clearly explains why feminism is hard to identify with in Latin America for black women and can be extended to indigenous women. She says,

> "When we talk about the myth of female fragility, which historically justified paternalistic protection of men over women, which women do we refer to? We, black women, are part of a number of women, probably the majority, who have never considered themselves in this myth, because we were never treated as fragile. We are part of a contingent group of women who worked for centuries as slaves on farms or in streets, as sellers, prostitutes ... "[12] (Carneiro 2003).

Carneiro goes on to question the women asking for rights to work in the job market, asserting that black women have been working since colonialism. She insinuates that

[12] Original text in Portuguese. "Quando falamos do mito da fragilidade feminina, que justificou historicamente a proteção paternalista dos homens sobre as mulheres, de que mulheres estamos falando? Nós, mulheres negras, fazemos parte de um contingente de mulheres, provavelmente majoritário, que nunca reconheceram em si mesmas esse mito, porque nunca fomos tratadas como frágeis. Fazemos parte de um contingente de mulheres que trabalharam durante séculos como escravas nas lavouras ou nas ruas, como vendedoras, quituteiras, prostitutas..."(Carneiro 2003). Translated by author.

black women were never included in Western feminism because it is hegemonic and oppressive. In Brazil, this Eurocentric form of feminism excludes the black and the poor. Carneiro asks a series of questions and calls to *enegrecer* feminism in Brazil towards political self-determination for the black woman's movement. The word "feminism" has been historically exclusive and Carneiro echoes theories of insectionality and Sorjourner Truth's *Ain't I a Woman?* arguments. There are artists like Yas who don't claim the word "feminism" for very legitimate reasons. However their actions in their work and music can be read as everyday and black feminist actions, thus creating a third space (Hill Collins 2006, 152). Hip hop fits in this third space. Women in the hip hop movement in general can be read as strong feminists because they enter a space where they are judged by their gender and not their art, yet continue to thrive. Yas mentions that she needs to work twice as hard to prove herself to be good, not as a woman but as a rapper. For women, this comes with restrictions.

Illustration 16: Photo of Yas. Photo Credit: Jonathon Orta

Religion is a way for some women and girls to be visible within hip hop while escaping moral judgments in Brazil. It serves as a way to escape the controlling images, yet it comes with a whole other set of rules. To pursue her solo career away from Christian rap towards what she calls "positive rap", Yas said she struggled with the church at first. Positive rap uses elements of Christianity without preaching the religion. Women of faith and in hip hop walk a thin line of moral judgements. It can be a tricky line given that mainstream hip hop oversexualizes women, specifically black women. This is why some choose to go through religion and others through imposing masculine traits. Sistah MC notes that more women are embracing their femininity within hip hop which can be read as empowerment and self-determination. This is not to generalize but is based on what I saw and heard from some people. There are some women who truly want to pursue Christian rap and others who feel more comfortable portraying masculine traits. There is an obvious gap that requires further research on women in Christian rap or those who use Christianity as a platform in their hip hop art.

Christian or Gospel rap in Brazil is a very large genre within periphery and black communities and among some female artists. According to John Burdick's *The Color of Sound*, there was a shift within hip hop in Brazil. In the 1990s Burdick notices a shift from black politics to 'periferic' politics within the hip hop groups through the changes of their names. This deracialization of hip hop was influenced by NGO's contracting rappers to rap for different projects focused on neighborhood and locality. Around this time, gospel rap in Brazil began to emerge. For many, hip hop is what helped them commit to Christianity and literally used hip hop as a form of faith through practicing in

organized religion. Whereas the *periferia* and its issues represented a stage for "temptations", gospel rap was a medium away from drugs, sex and money (Burdick 2013). I noticed some women and girls in the skate and hip hop scene were religious or used religion to justify their participation in a culture that was perceived to be mostly male. Although Burdick interviewed mostly male rappers, I did not come in contact with many Christian rappers. The women who used Christianity as a means to enter the hip hop and skate realm seemed to believe strongly in their faith. Two of them talked strongly about the influence their religion had on their music either informally or through the formal interview. At DNG, co-owner Junior also mentioned to us that they sponsored a young skater girl in promotional her video that focuses on her religion. He explained to me that the only way her parents would allow her to participate in the skate and hip hop culture was if she related her involvement to Evangelicism. Junior agreed that it is difficult for girls and some used religion as a way to participate in the culture. The visibility of women continuingly confronts sexism within hip hop, and the smaller population of queer people participating is challenging heteropatriarchy within the movement.

In my experience during my fieldwork research I did not come across many out queer people in hip hop. According to Pritchard, the "presence of lesbian and bisexual women of color in hip hop has been virtually ignored by the popular media and record companies" (Pritchard 2007, 20). This can be applicable to Brazil's case as well. One of the few times I noticed queerness in a hip hop space was when MC Sant performed with black queer samba singer, Mart'nalia, to a large, mostly white audience.

I analyze Mart'nalia and her performance I attended as an example of a black queer woman cultural practitioner. Mart'nalia is daughter of the famous sambista Martinho da Vila and is quite loved and respected by people of all different classes, especially those from Zona Norte and Zona Oeste peripheries. I didn't find much online regarding her queerness and fame, but in one interview with *Globo* she says she did not suffer much discrimination as a queer woman. She comments that her father doesn't get involved much in her love life as "he has his woman and I have mine" (Rissato 2013). Questions for further research I have are: Due to her fame, are people are willing to tolerate or look past her sexuality? Or is she more accepted because she is performing more masculine traits through her baggy clothing and shorter hair? In *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*, Kara Keeling argues that there exists a

> "regime of visibility that has conceded to currently hegemonic notions of 'lesbian and gay sexuality' and to the primacy of binary and exclusive gender categories in the articulation of sexuality" (Keeling 2005, 218).

Mart'nalia's fame allows many fans to accept her sexuality and gender performance. Given that she is portraying more 'masculine' characteristics, it contributes to this regime of visibility because this gender performance fits the gender binary. Also, because her father is a famous and respected artist who supports his daughter's career, it appears to urge fans to recognize her art first before her sexuality. One of the other few spaces where black queerness was visible within hip hop was in Zona Norte of Rio de Janeiro.

The Baile Charmes of the Viaduto de Madureira attracts people from all over Rio. In this space, it was mostly a young black population and most people seemed welcoming of the other queer youth. They were a part of the community and did not sit outside of it.

Their dance battles would be hip hop based yet emphasized the vouguing, a style of dance that has been historically present in black male queer spaces. The young black queer males presence also brings wreck to the public sphere and challenges the gender binary and black youth sexual politics. However, like women entering the hip hop scene, queer men in these spaces did not make their presence visible until they literally carved out a circle, a dance cypher. The marginalized people within this marginalized culture in Brazil made their presence visible through dance first. According to Simone Monteiro's comparative study on sexuality in youth communities in Lapa and Madureira, many queer youth in Madureira usually don't socialize with many heterosexual youth and have created their own spaces in nightclubs and at events for queer youth. When interviewing a young person identifying as a queer *moreno*, he mentioned that although he liked going to the Baile Charme, he cannot express himself and be himself. The reason why he goes and can identify with those places is because of the music. At the Baile Charmes it is common that they play both Brazilian and American soul and R&B where youth come and dance (Monteiro 2010, 96). The black diasporic connections have connected not only women to the hip hop movement, but also queer people. With the exception of krumping and breakdancing, other forms of hip hop dance are perceived as a feminized aspect of the movement where artists are using their body for empowerment. I am curious to see how young black queer people in Brazil will not only continue to conquer spaces in general, but also in a traditionally patriarchal, yet changing hip hop.

More recently, there has been one out queer black rapper calling attention to queer visibility within the hip hop movement. Rico Dalasam, rapper from the *periferia* of São

Paulo has been a hit and shaken up the hip hop scene. With influences from Racionais MCs, to Dina Di to Little Richard, Dalasam has launched a new album and his well-distributed music video "Aceite-C" speaking of self-esteem that has even made MTV headlines. In an interview Dalasam mentions that although homophobia in rap is prevalent, this discrimination is rooted in history and his music represents a new "curve" that destroys these stereotypes (Guimares 2015). Artists like Dalasam are relatively new in Brazil's hip hop scene, yet are quickly dominating with their strong production quality in their music and music videos.

Hip hop scenes are slowly integrating women and I hope continue to include people from other groups that have been historically marginalized in order to truly live to its community and social justice roots. While 15 years ago women in hip hop felt it necessary to dress in "male clothing" and adopt "masculine" traits, now more women are embracing their femininity and redefining this binary. The queer black communities are also creating their new spaces via their music and dance, hoping to create their own spaces within these marginalized groups. I hope to see this continue evolving and growing not only in Brazil, but also globally. Thus, further research is necessary to analyze these marginal groups within the peripherical communities that are constantly redefining the hip hop movement.

Conclusion

With Rio de Janeiro's hip hop movement developing and redefining its version of the scene under young peoples terms, they do so by reclaiming and carving space for themselves in the form of parties, MC battles, performances, cyphers, and breakdance events. Understanding space and its historical context is vital in hip hops' purpose in Rio. Rio de Janeiro's social and political history created an environment where hip hop is still the language of the periphery, of the favelado, of the black youth, of the woman, of the poor. My research, *Ta Ligado: Rodas e Hip Hop no Rio*, provides an in depth analysis of Rio de Janeiro's hip hop movement. Hip hop artists and organizers are my main source of knowledge through interviews and events. I hope to contribute to the media and education field through the documentary web series in order to provide material that can be accessible to people with Internet on their cell phones or computers all around the globe. With this, I can distribute this project and expose the kind of community work the artists and organizers are doing while contributing to the global diasporic hip hop community. In my written research, I hope to contribute more scholarly writing towards hip hop in Rio.

It is important to address my identity as a light skinned woman from an immigrant working class background, hip hop practitioner, and my status as a student from a U.S. academic institution in this conclusion to remind the reader of the importance of my positionality in my research. Throughout the chapters I addressed the struggles of being a woman within any hip hop movement (and most male dominated places) and of the advantages of coming from an immigrant working class background. Because my parents

came from a different country escaping poverty and war, I could somewhat relate to those who are children of Nordestino migrants. Of course, race and historical context differ, but the story of migration was a connection. As a light skinned foreigner, my experiences greatly differed from the local black and brown organizers and artists I interviewed. It gave me privileges in some instances. For instance, when driving down the street with the dancer Pierry, he would explain that if we (my partner and I) weren't with him, he would more likely be stopped by the police given that racial discrimination is heavily practiced in Rio. It opened some doors, like having access to certain hip hop events and organizations because I was a "foreigner" trying to learn about hip hop carioca culture. It seemed that people trusted me, to an extent. It also closed some doors because I also did not speak the language very well within the first month. Not only did I not speak the language very well, I also had to pick up the *giria* pretty quickly as it is commonly used in hip hop circles. Coming from a U.S. academic institution also gave me access to certain places and people like the Imperator and obtaining interviews with known artists such as DJ TR. What allowed me to enter these spaces weighed more heavily on the fact that I was in the process of producing a documentary web series. Having a camera and mic led me to interviews very quickly and motivated people invite me into their hip hop spaces and events. The exposure and opportunity for cultural exchange seemed like a positive aspect of the project to the some people I interviewed. My promise to distribute the video through the means of social media created a sense of trust that I would record information that was both useful for my project and helpful for the groups and artists involved.

To summarize, for both the written and video thesis, I researched how young black people specifically used space as a way to contribute to the hip hop movement and empower themselves. I travelled to Rio de Janeiro in the summer of 2014 with two videographers and one hip hop organization contact. With that contact, I was then introduced to a network of various artists, organizations, businesses and hip hop events that invited my project. Before and after my fieldwork research, I also conducted a lengthy literature review focusing on the racial disparities in Brazil, black feminism, police violence, hip hop history, and theories of space by authors such as João Vargas, Jaime Alves, Tricia Rose, Patricia Hill Collins, Henri Lefebrvre, Arjun Appadurai and Michael Dawson. This has helped me develop different arguments in each chapter while still providing contextual information to the audience. This contextual and analytical information is vital, given that it is not fully included in detail through the video version of *Ta Ligado*.

In the first chapter I found that it is imperative to set out the contextual groundwork on Rio de Janeiro's history with black music and politics to fully understand carioca hip hop. By linking black music and culture with institutional violence, I am able to connect the birth of hip hop. In Rio de Janeiro black youth are growing up in a police state and are constantly targeted through the means of violence, poverty, and institutional racism. Hip hop is the voice of people who struggle in those environments. In this first chapter I explore the importance of this history in order to understand today's movement.

In the second chapter, I go into a much more in depth ethnographic analysis of space, youth and hip hop in Rio. By providing a summary of 7 different hip hop spaces I

filmed, I categorize space and hip hop as private, public and NGO. Young people in hip hop are constantly negotiating space with the state, audience, and economy as a form of resistance and empowerment. My main finding here is that hip hop in Rio is transient, transformative and can live in any space. Young black artists are mediators of this geographical movement and are responsible for disrupting spaces for empowerment. They are constantly negotiating space whether it is with agents of a state of oppression and genocide, or with white audiences in Zona Norte. This chapter is a contribution to hip hop Brazilian studies providing analysis on hip hop from neighborhoods not yet analyzed in academia.

The last and third chapter focuses on black feminism and queer presence in hip hop in Brazil. This chapter was the hardest for me to write. Firstly, until a couple of years ago I did not identify with the word feminist because coming from a Latino immigrant working class background, that word was an upper-middle class white woman's word. Using this word would associate me with that group, a group that has been historically oppressive to my community and me. It was only after gaining a better understanding through higher education, that I was able to identify with feminism under my own terms in regards to feminism for women of color inspired by people such as Patricia Hill-Collins, Sueli Carneiro and Queen Latifah. Thus a major finding in this chapter was that black women's participation in hip hop may be read as feminist actions given their political messages and ability to bring "wreck" in the public sphere. Even if they specifically do not identify with the specific feminism they learned, their presence was an act of countercultural resistance. Also, in this chapter I analyze how religion and gender

in Brazilian hip hop have a strong connection that is highly understudied. I also highlight the importance of the growing queer presence in Brazilian hip hop, yet note that there is a long way to go where queer people can feel comfortable in this community. Homophobia and sexism is still prevalent in hip hop and artists within these margins are creating their own spaces to feel empowered while resisting cultural hegemony.

Those were the major findings that my research revealed yet also left me with many unanswered questions. It is pertinent to continue to develop hip hop studies globally in order to get a wider understanding of how politics, oppression, and history continue to affect cultural development. In this written thesis I hope to contribute an ethnographic narrative about the hip hop spaces in Rio de Janeiro that have yet to be studied. However, there is much more work and growth to be recorded on this developing cultural movement.

My broader finding in this thesis project was the importance of using new media within marginalized communities expressing culture. My interviews would have not gone the same way with the women, men and youth I connected with if it wasn't for the video portion of the project. I think it is imperative to hear young black and brown people tell their own stories through their art and I have the privilege to record it and distribute it. With the video project, I hope to contribute more to the field of hip hop global and diasporic studies through a media lens. Putting these videos on a social network such as YouTube, Facebook and Instagram will allow artists and communities to be exposed, and also contribute to the hip hop dialogue worldwide. It also opens up opportunities to look at academic and scholarly work through the eyes of the artists and leaders themselves

through film. I hope to slowly change the hegemony within the academic world as well. Because my work is relying mostly on the disciplines of anthropology, black studies, and ethnomusicology, I use film to help redefine what is considered to be acceptable within academia. Similar to hip hops' purpose of empowerment, I use video as a space for empowerment within a sometimes restrictive academic language. This is important because this language (both academic and English language) is not accessible to many of the marginalized communities I come from and worked with. Film and media helps break down these barriers for the communities I engage with and can participate in the dialogue as well. This project is the first of many more I hope to produce regarding culture, music, race, gender and politics in Latin America.

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